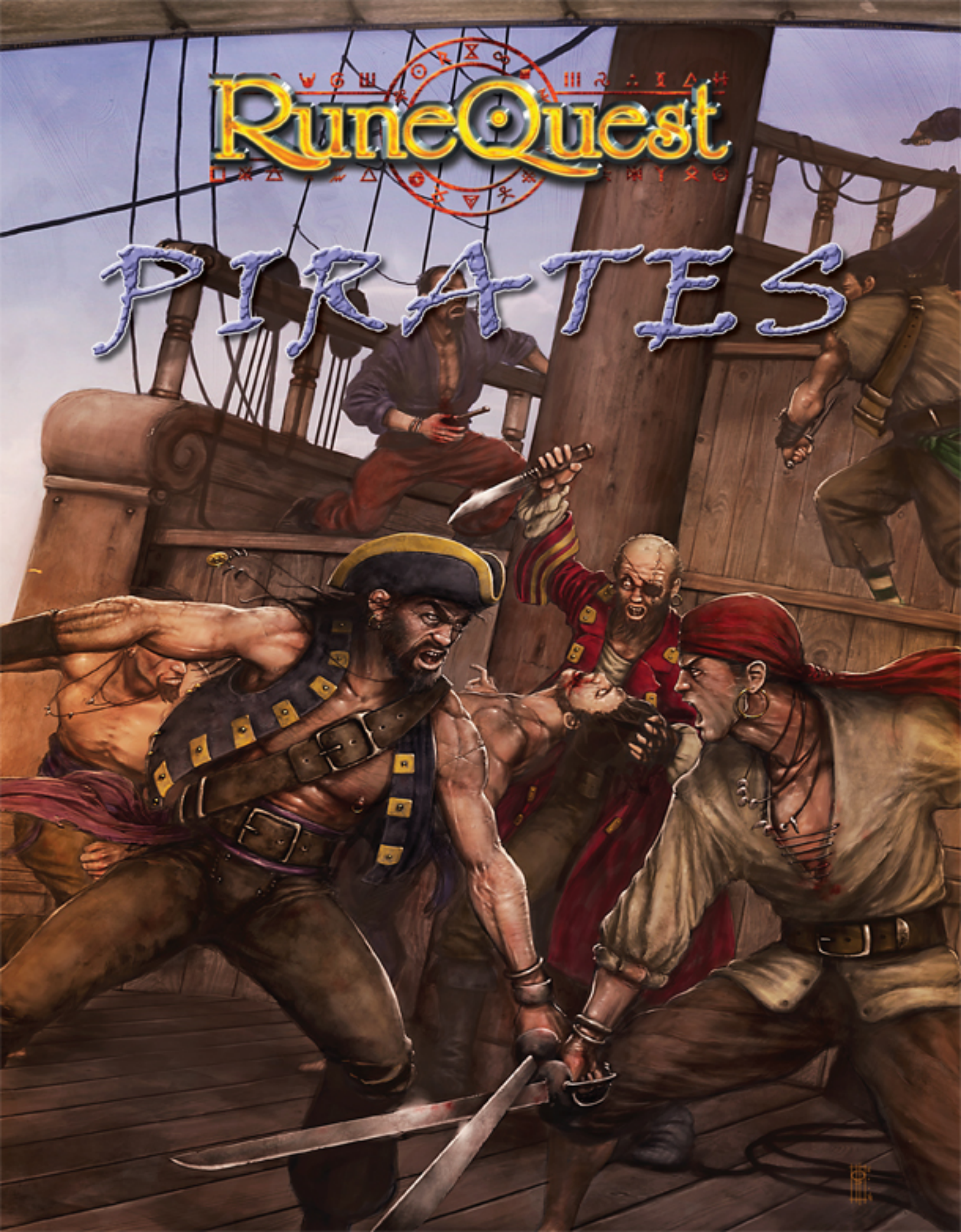# RuneQuest

PIRATES

RuneQuest

PIRATES

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Contents

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INTRODUCTION

A Pyrate is *Hostis humanis generis, a common Enemy, with whom neither Faith nor Oath is to be kept… if Pyracy be committed on the Ocean, and the Pyrates in the attempt be overcome, the Captors may, without any Solemnity of Condemnation, hang them up at the Main-Yard; if they are brought to the next Port, & the Judge rejects the Tryal, or the Captors cannot wait for the Judge, without Peril or Loss, Justice may be done upon them by the Captors.* – *from* A General History of the Robberies & Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates

The golden age of piracy lasted only three or four decades, but its mythic legacy has endured now for two or three centuries. While piracy – taking and robbing ships at sea – is ancient, and continues to this very day, the common conception of the pirate, with his devilish ways, his regalia of pistols and parrots and skulls, his cant and his cruelty is defined by that golden age, by the period roughly from 1680 to 1720, when the pirates were hunted down by the English Royal Navy. This book brings the pirates of that era – and other times – to life in *RuneQuest* campaigns.

The group and the Games Master should familiarise themselves with the *RuneQuest* rules as found in the main rulebook and the *RuneQuest Companion*. When they are happy they know how to play the game then it is off to **The Making of a Pirate** chapter to roll up their pirates, with visits to the **Reputation, Legendary Abilities & Vices**, **Chattels, Blades & Gunshot** and **Crews & Sworn Companions** chapters to round out the characters.

Both **Ships & the Sea** and the acts of **Piracy & Plunder** are described in the chapters of the same name, while

Combat on the High Seas gives rules for all manner of encounters and battles. **Ports, Trade and the Law** gives characters a place to hide out and sell their ill-gotten gains. Finally there are several different styles of play open to the group, which are discussed in the **Campaigns** chapter.

2

THE MAKING
OF A PIRATE

Before touching the dice, discuss your pirate with the other players and the Games Master. A beginning character is a young pirate, at the start of his career. Maybe he has just joined a pirate crew, or maybe that will happen in his first adventure.

Character Generation

RuneQuest pirates are created using the standard rules from *RuneQuest* (and, optionally, the *RuneQuest Companion*), with the following changes.

Part 0: Initial Concept

Why is your character a pirate? Did he run away to the sea for plunder? To escape a cruel master? Out of desperation? Perhaps he was kidnapped by a pirate crew, because he is a talented carpenter or gunner? Does he dream of retiring from the sea when he has enough money to buy the hand of some pretty girl, or will he be satisfied only with a mansion and a title and a pardon from the king? Does he want revenge on a particular foe, or does he want to send all humanity to hell?

Part 1: Characteristics

No changes.

Part 2: Attributes

No changes.

Part 3: Basic Skills

There are two new basic Weapon Skills, Pistols and Longarms. See page 22 for descriptions of gunpowder weapons.

Many *RuneQuest* weapons are no longer in common use in the era of pirates. Shields, spears, hammers, flails and most swords are now relegated to museums or primitive barbaric tribes, as are bows and crossbows. Common weapons are rapiers and cutlasses, daggers, pikes and other polearms, and guns of all sorts.

Part 4: Previous Experience

Peasants may add Longarms +10% to their list of available weapon skills.

Townsmen may add both Pistols +10% and Longarms +10% to their list of available weapon skills. They may also add Courtesy to the Advanced skills which they may choose.

Nobles may add both Pistols +15% and Longarms +15% to their list of available weapon skills. They may also add Courtesy to the Advanced skills which they may choose.

The mariner cultural background from the *RuneQuest Companion* is common used in many pirate campaigns.

A list of common professions for pirate campaigns is given on pages 5-8, but a follower of any profession at all could end up as a pirate. Among pirates, a man's past life was considered irrelevant, and many became pirates to escape some tragedy in their backgrounds.

A few of those professions deserve extra description. The word 'buccaneer' has become synonymous with 'pirate', but it referred originally to outcasts and runaways who fled to the beaches of obscure islands, living on wild pigs which they barbecued on wood racks called boucans. They were outlaws, the dregs of society for the most part, and often became pirates. Gentry are quite the opposite – wealthy people of noble blood, such as governors' daughters. 'Entertainer' covers everything from acrobats to whores, though pirates tended to be fonder of the latter.

Starting Money

A character's starting money is calculated in Spanish reales, which are roughly equal in value to *RuneQuest* silver coins. Currency is discussed in more detail on page 20.

In addition to a character's starting money, he gets the set trappings of his profession, and also some random equipment, reflecting the take-what-you-can-get randomness of the pirate lifestyle. See the Random Starting Equipment table on page 10.

Advanced Skills

Gunnery (INT+DEX)

This covers the loading, aiming and firing of cannons and other shipboard weapons, as well as making grenades and powder bombs. It also teaches the character how to properly store and maintain such weapons.

Cooking (INT+POW)

While anyone can roast a wild pig or throw a few carrots into a pot, it takes skill and talent to make edible meals aboard a ship. A good cook is welcome among pirates.

Courtesy (INT+CHA)

The art of politeness and correct behaviour in noble circles.

Craft (INT)

Especially important crafts on board a ship include Carpentry, Ropemaking, Sailmaking and Shipwright.

Handiwork (INT)

This is the skill of making basic repairs and jury-rigging equipment. Handiwork can substitute for most Craft skills when it comes to maintaining and repairing a damaged vessel, but cannot be used for more complex tasks. A character could use Handiwork to make a simple dug-out canoe, for example, but not to build a galleon.

Lore (INT)

Navigation and the reading of maps is an important application of the Lore skill in this era.

Chemistry allows a character to make various chemical compounds, including gunpowder. It also allows a character to assay the purity of minerals, like gold.

Weapon Skills

Pistols and rifles are easier to use than other weapons, so they begin with a base score of DEX x2. However, a character must make a skill check to correctly reload a pistol. See page 22 for more firearms rules.

Pistols (10+DEX)

This skill covers all forms of handguns, from common weapons to exotic concealed weapons or duelling pistols.

Professions

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Trappings
Apothecary	Townsfolk	Evaluate +10%, First Aid +10%, Lore (plant) +10%	Healing, Lore (Chemistry)	Leather apron, chemistry set, good clothing, shoes, one Random.
Blacksmith	Barbarian, Peasant, Townsman	1H Hammer +10%, Evaluate +5%, Resilience +5%	Craft (Blacksmith), Lore (Mineral) **Pick One** Craft (Armourer), Craft (Weaponsmith), Craft (Gunsmith), Engineering, Handiwork, Mechanisms	Blacksmith's hammer, tongs and other tools, good clothing, boots, one Random.
Buccaneer	Barbarian, Peasant, Townsfolk, Mariner	Boating +5%, Lore (Animal) +5%, Sing +5%, Stealth +5% **Pick One** Spear +10%, Dagger +10%, Longarms +10%	Survival **Pick One** Cooking, Language (any), Lore (any), Shiphandling, Tracking	Musket, dagger, poor clothing, half a pig, two Random.
Cabin Boy	Peasant, Townsfolk	Boating +5%, Dodge +5%, Perception +5%, Stealth +5%	Shiphandling **Pick Two** Disguise, Language (any), Lore (any), Play Instrument, Streetwise, Survival	Poor clothing, one Random.
Cannoneer	Peasant, Townsman, Mariner	Longarms +5%, Perception +5%, Pistols +5%, Resilience +5%	Engineering, Gunnery **Pick One** Craft (Chemistry), Craft (Blacksmithing), Handiwork, Healing, Mechanisms, Shiphandling	Uniform or poor clothing, boots, pistol, one Random.
Clerk	Townsman	Evaluate +5%, Influence +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Persistence +5%	Lore (any) **Pick Two** Courtesy, Lore (any), Language (any), Streetwise	Good clothing, wig, shoes.
Craftsman	Barbarian, Peasant, Townsman	Evaluate +10%, Influence +5%, Persistence +5%	Craft (any) **Pick Two** Craft (any), Engineering, Handiwork, Mechanisms	Poor clothing, shoes.
Diplomat	Townsman, Noble	Influence +20%, Lore (World) +5%, Perception +5%	Courtesy **Pick One** Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument	Fine clothing, rapier, shoes, various documents, toiletries and other gentlemanly accoutrements, one Random.

Professions (continued)

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Trappings
Doctor	Townsman, Noble	First Aid +20%, Lore (Plant) +5%, Perception +5%	Courtesy, Healing	Surgeon's kit, fine clothing, shoes, one Random.
Entertainer	Barbarian, Peasant, Townsman, Noble	Influence +5%, Perception +5% Sing +5% Stealth +5% **Pick Two** 1H Sword +10%, Acrobatics +10%, Dodge +10%, Lore (World), +10%, Rapier +10%, Sing +10%, Sleight +10%, Stealth +10%, Throwing +10%	**Pick One** Courtesy, Dance, Disguise, Martial Arts, Mechanisms, Play Instrument, Streetwise	Poor but flamboyant clothing, shoes, two Random.
Explorer	Barbarian, Noble, Mariner	Longarms +10%, Lore (World) +20%, Perception +5%, Resilience +5%	**Pick Two** Handiwork, Language, Lore (Astronomy), Lore (Geography), Lore (Navigation), Shiphandling, Survival	Good clothing, cloak, rapier or hatchet, pistol, musket, boots, maps, compass, spyglass, two Random.
Farmer	Barbarian, Peasant	Athletics +10%, Driving +10%, **Pick Two** Lore (Animal) +15%, Lore (Plant) +15%, Resilience +15%		Poor clothing, shoes, pitchfork or other implements, musket, one Random.
Fisherman	Barbarian, Peasant	Athletics +5%, Boating +10%, Lore (Animal) +5%, Resilience +5%, Throwing +5%	**Pick Two** Cooking, Handiwork, Shiphandling	Poor clothing, fishing rod, two Random.
Gentry	Noble	Influence +10%, Lore (World) +5%, Riding +5% **Pick Two** 1H Sword +5%, Driving +5%, Longarms +5%, Perception +5%, Rapier +5%, Sing +5%, Sleight +5%	Courtesy **Pick One** Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument	Fine clothing, shoes, toiletries and other accoutrements.
Herdsman	Barbarian Peasant	First Aid +5%, Lore (Animal) +15%, Resilience +5%, Longarms +5%	Cooking, Survival	Poor clothing, staff, one Random.
Mercenary	Barbarian, Peasant, Townsman	Lore (World) +10% **Pick Two** 1H Sword +15%, Pistols +15%, Polearms +15%, Longarms +15% **Pick Two** Athletics +5%, Dagger +5%, Dodge +5%, Driving +5%, Evaluate +5%, Resilience +5%, Riding +5%, Unarmed +5%		Poor clothing, breastplate, dagger, rapier or cutlass, two pistols, musket, boots, one Random.

Professions (continued)

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Trappings
Merchant	Townsman	Evaluate +15% Influence +10% Lore (World) +5% **Pick One** Handiwork, Language, Lore (logistics), Shiphandling	Courtesy	Good clothing, shoes, dagger, one Random.
Militiaman	Peasant, Townsman	1H Sword +5%, Athletics +10%, Dodge +5%, Longarm +10%, Resilience +5%, Polearm +10%, Unarmed +5%		Good clothing, breastplate, dagger, pistol and polearm or musket, boots.
Miner	Peasant	1H Axe +10%, 2H Axe +10%, Athletics +10%, Resilience +10%	Lore (Mineral)	Poor clothing, pickaxe.
Missionary	Peasant, Townsman, Noble	First Aid +5%, Influence +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Persistence +5% **Pick One** Boating +10%, Driving +10%, Perception +10%, Riding +10%, Sing +10%	Lore (Theology), Survival	Poor clothing, Bible, one Random.
Naval Officer	Townsman, Mariner, Noble	Dodge +5%, Influence +10%, Perception +5%, Resilience +5%, Longarms +5%	Shiphandling **Pick One** Courtesy, Engineering, Gunnery, Handiwork, Lore (Navigation)	Good clothing, rapier, two pistols, cloak.
Pirate	Barbarian, Townsfolk, Peasant, Mariner	Athletics +5%, Acrobatics +5%, Boating +5%, Lore (World) +5%, **Pick Two** 1H Sword +10%, Longarms +10%, Pistols +10%, Rapier +10%, Sleight +10%, Stealth +10%, Unarmed +10%	**Pick One** Disguise, Handiwork, Gunnery, Shiphandling, Streetwise, Tracking	Poor clothing, dagger, cutlass, two pistols, boots, two Random.
Priest	Peasant, Townsman, Noble	Influence +10%, Persistence +5%, Sing +5%	Courtesy, Language (Latin), Lore (Theology)	Good clothing, Bible, one Random.
Sailor	Peasant, Townsman, Mariner	Acrobatics +10%, Athletics +5%, Boating +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Resilience +5%	Shiphandling, Handiwork	Poor clothing, dagger, one Random.
Sailmaker	Peasant, Townsman, Mariner	Boating +10%, Persistence +10%	Craft (Sailmaking), Handiwork, Shiphandling	Poor clothing, shoes, dagger.

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Trappings
Shipwright	Townsman, Mariner	Boating +10%, Evaluate +5%, Lore (World) +5%	Craft (Shipwright), Handiwork Pick One Engineering, Gunnery, Mechanisms, Shiphandling	Good clothing, shoes, shipwright's tools.
Slave	Barbarian, Peasant	Athletics +10%, Resilience +10%, Unarmed +10%	Pick Two Craft (any), Handiwork, Streetwise, Survival, Tracking	Poor clothing.
Soldier	Barbarian, Peasant, Townsman, Noble	Dodge +5%, Lore (World) +5%, Resilience +5%, Unarmed +5% Pick Two 1H Sword +10%, Athletics +10%, Dagger +10%, Driving +10%, Longarms +10%, Pistols +10%, Polearm +10%, Riding +10%	Pick One Courtesy, Gunnery, Lore (Military Tactics), Survival	Breastplate, good clothing, boots, cloak, cutlass or broadsword, two pistols or musket.
Thief	Barbarian, Peasant, Townsman	Acrobatics +5%, Evaluate +10%, Perception +5%, Sleight +10%, Stealth +10%	Pick One Disguise, Mechanisms, Streetwise	Poor clothing, dagger, pistol, three Random.
Trader	Peasant, Townsman, Mariner	Evaluate +10%, Influence +10%, Lore (World) +5% Pick One Boating +10%, Driving +10%, Riding +10%, Sleight +10%	Pick One Cooking, Craft (Chemistry), Healing, Mechanisms, Streetwise	Good clothing, shoes, dagger, two Random.

Longarms (10+DEX)

The Longarms skill covers rifles, muskets and blunderbusses.

Whip (STR+DEX)

Used to cover all manner of whips and lariats, including the infamous cat o'nine tails, the nine-braided whip used for punishing sailors in many navies. While whips do little damage, they can be used to impede enemies or as a ranged grapple.

Part Five – Finishing Touches

RuneQuest Pirates characters get free skill points as normal. See page below for details on more experienced characters.

RuneQuest Pirates characters all have a Reputation, which is calculated slightly differently to the standard Reputation. See Reputation, page 11.

RuneQuest Pirates characters also get Hero Points as normal. A character starts with 2 Hero Points.

RuneQuest Pirates characters may take up to two points in Vices (see page 15).

Next, move onto the rules for creating a crew (page 25) and a ship (page 35).

Advanced Characters

The basic rules above create pirates at the start of their careers, just after they have joined a pirate crew. Older, more seasoned characters can be created using the rules for advanced characters.

The rules for advanced characters (see *RuneQuest*, page 103) are used as normal in *RuneQuest Pirates*; however, if Runes are not being used in the campaign, then characters get free Legendary Abilities instead.

A Seasoned character starts with one Legendary Ability, with a maximum Hero Point cost of 2 or less.

A Veteran character starts with up to two Legendary Abilities, with a maximum total Hero Point cost of 4 or less.

A Master character starts with up to three Legendary Abilities, with a maximum total Hero Point cost of 8 or less.

A Veteran character starts with up to four Legendary Abilities, with a maximum total Hero Point cost of 12 or less.

Random Starting Equipment

In the anarchic ports frequented by the pirates, items change hands regularly. Pawnshops do a roaring trade, while thieves scavenge from the losers in a brawl in a bar or a duel in an alleyway, and inveterate gamblers or drunkards give up prized treasures for another hand of cards or bottle of rot-gut rum. Pirate characters, therefore, tend to have an assortment of odd items and strange possessions that may or may not come in useful.
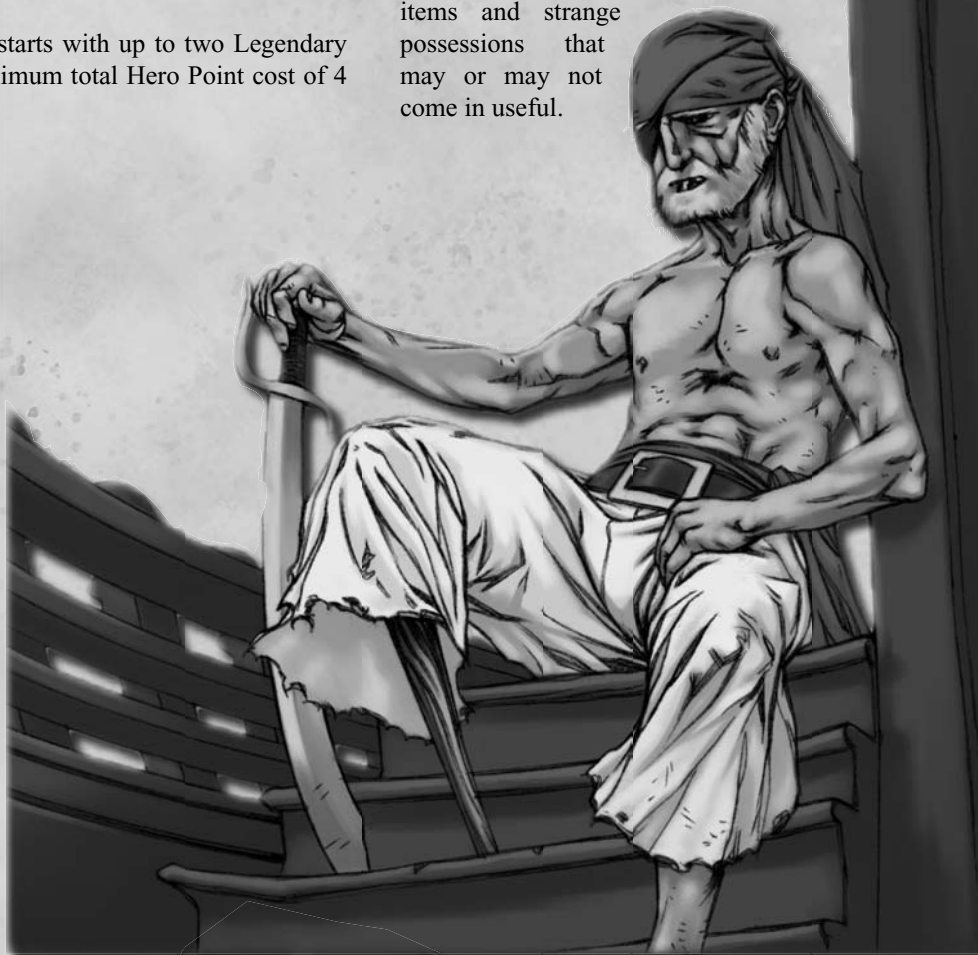
The Making of a Pirate

Roll	Item
01	Mongrel dog
02	A pet albino rat
03	A rather foul-mouthed parrot
04	Lucky rabbit's foot
05	Dozen mummified chicken legs
06	Alligator tooth necklace
07	Silver cat's skull
08	Flea-bitten pet cat
09	Fine drinking horn
10	Horse
11	Rusted key
12	Empty rum bottle
13	2D6 debased silver coins (worthless)
14	Broken spyglass
15	Broken compass
16	Rusted and broken manacles
17	Cracked glass eye
18	One left shoe
19	Absurdly overlarge pantaloons
20	Belaying pin, ornately scrimshawed
21	Sailmaker's knife
22	Deck of cards
23	Deck of cards, marked
24	Dice
25	Dice, loaded
26	Dice, human bone
27	Serrated knife
28	Gilt powder horn
29	Monocle
30	Bedraggled gentleman's wig
31	False beard
32	Gypsy headscarf
33	Very fine hat, indeed
34	Black leather boots with bright brass buckles
35	Flamboyant coat
36	Very fine belt
37	Signet ring
38	Knuckledusters
39	Pocket mirror
40	Eye patch
41	Promissory note for 2D6 reales, owed you by a pirate
42	Dead man's skull
43	Tobacco pipe
44	Compass, unreliable
45	Sea chart, unreliable
46	Fine clothes
47	Women's dress, fine
48	Piece of the True Cross (alleged)
49	Feather from an angel's wing (alleged)
50	Voudun drogue (talisman)
51	Family bible
52	Book of psalms
53	Ancient obsidian sacrificial knife
54	Potent incense, 1D6 sticks
55	Bottle of holy water
56	Bottle of patent cure-all
57	Blunderbuss, rusted and broken
58	Musket, rusted and broken
59	Working musket
60	Working blunderbuss
61	Pistol, filthy and rusted
62	Pistol, working
63	Pistol, exquisite (+5% to hit)
64	Dirk
65	Cutlass, rusted
66	Cutlass
67	Vial of poison
68	Rapier
69	Breastplate
70	Duellist's half-cape
71	Aztec gold coin
72	Painted miniature
73	Book, scientific treatise
74	Book, medical textbook
75	Book, poetry
76	Book, ship's log
77	Book, accounts
78	Book, diary, boring
79	Book, diary, madman's
80	Book, diary, scandalous
81	Wedding ring
82	Finger bones in a bag
83	Puppet, marionette
84	Handkerchief, embroidered
85	Rolled-up painting
86	Tin whistle
87	Bone flute
88	Mandolin
89	Message in a bottle
90	Jewelled crucifix, heirloom of the family
91	Deed to a plantation in the Caribbean
92	Last Will and Testament
93	Fragment of strange crystal
94	Map to buried treasure
95	The Black Spot
96-99	Roll again twice
00	Roll again three times

REPUTATION, LEGENDARY ABILITIES & VICES

Reputation takes on a new importance in *RuneQuest Pirates*, as a character's Reputation translates into influence on board ship. It is calculated somewhat differently, but otherwise functions in the same way as described in the *RuneQuest Companion*, page 53.

Starting Reputation

Circumstance	Reputation Modifier
CHA 12+	+1
CHA 15+	+2
CHA 18+	+3
Per other characteristic over 15	+1
Per each skill over 70% from the following list: Acrobatics, Artillery, Firearms, Influence, Longarms, Lore (navigation), Perception, Rapier, 1H Sword, Shiphandling	+1

Using Reputation

For Reputation to have an impact on a character's life and dealings with Non-Player Characters, the character must make a Reputation test.

For a pirate, Reputation affects the use of the Influence skill, and also determines a character's sway over his crew. It also has some impact on skills such as Disguise. The Reputation Effects table gives some general guidelines for bonuses to skills based on the Reputation of the Player Characters.

Whether or not the character receives a bonus or penalty to his Influence test depends upon the nature of his Reputation and who he is dealing with.

Reputation Increases

Circumstance	Reputation Modifier[1]
Character defeated / was defeated by minor enemy (rival pirate, merchant ship)	+2/–10
Character defeated / was defeated by major enemy (rival pirate, pirate hunter)	+5/–5
Character defeated / was defeated by deadly enemy (rival pirate, Royal Navy)	+10/–2
Become the captain of a ship	+4
Become admiral	+10
Return from far East	+4
Become governor of a small town	+2
Become governor of a large town	+4
Received a title	+4
Capturing a powerful ship	+4
Per 2,000 reales captured	+1
Other impressive victory	+2
Notorious indulgence of a Vice	+2
When any of the following skills reaches 100%: Acrobatics, Artillery, Firearms, Influence, Longarms, Lore (navigation), Perception, Rapier, 1H Sword, Shiphandling	+1
Defeating a foe of lesser Reputation in single combat	1/10th foe's Reputation
Defeating a foe of greater Reputation in single combat	1/5th foe's Reputation
Acts of infamous brutality, cunning, devilry or showmanship	+1 to +6

[1] Most of these modifiers are cumulative. If a character is both a Master-level character and has recently defeated a grave nearby threat, he is entitled to both bonuses. However, he does not receive the bonuses for being a Seasoned- or Veteran-level character – those are subsumed by the Master-level bonus.

Reputation Effects

Reputation	Modifier to Influence Tests	Penalty to Disguise Tests
1–2	—	–0%
3–5	+5% / –5%	–0%
6–10	+10% / –10%	–5%
11–15	+15% / –15%	–10%
16–20	+15% / –20%	–10%
21–25	+20% / –20%	–15%
26–30	+25% / –25%	–15%
31–40	+30% / –35%	–20%
41–50	+40% / –40%	–25%

On board a ship, there are a number of modifiers to a character's Reputation. See page 11.

Reputation is especially important for pirate captains, as the sight of a particularly fearsome pirate flag can convince some prey into surrendering immediately.

Reputation Changes

A character who is out of circulation (marooned on a desert island, on a voyage to the other side of the world, or living in luxury on some plantation) has his Reputation decrease by 1D6 points per month.

A character who is believed to be dead, or who takes on a new identity can build up a Reputation for this second identity.

Reputation of…	You are….	Reward for your capture
10 or less	Unknown	None
11-15	Known by people in Port Royal or New Providence	None
16-20	Known by many in the Caribbean	1,000 reales
21-30	Known by the Royal Navy	5,000 reales
31-40	Infamous	25,000 reales
41+	Known world-wide	50,000 reales

Optional Rule: Reputation and the Great Powers

There are four major powers in the Caribbean – the English, the Spanish, the Dutch and the French. While all four despise pirates, they may be favourably disposed to those who harm their enemies, and especially hostile to those who act against the Power's interests. This is reflected in a special modifier to Reputation, called Standing. This modifier applies only when the character is in a port or on board a ship loyal to that power. Standing always adds *positively* to Reputation, making it more likely that the character will be recognised, but a character with positive standing is well liked and honoured, while negative standing means that the character is considered a criminal.

This adds an extra level of politics and book-keeping to the game, so it should only be included if the differing agendas of the powers is going to come into the campaign.

Character's Action	Standing With Affected Power	Standing With Other Powers
First time he takes a prize	–2	+1
Each attack thereafter	–1	+0
Takes a prize worth more than 50,000 reales	–4	+2
Attacks a port	–2	+1
Sacks a port	–4	+2

Of the Legendary Abilities in the *RuneQuest* rulebook (page 98), several are suitable for use in *Pirates* games.

Always Something to Swing From
Requirements: DEX 15+, Acrobatics 90%+
Hero Points: 8
No matter where you are, there is always a rope, line, chandelier, jungle vine, pulley, inn sign, flagpole or other thing to swing from. Such dramatic acrobatics can be used to swing past opponents. You can also swing into combat as a charge, gaining a +5% bonus to hit in addition to the normal +1D4 bonus to damage.

Born to the Sea
Requirements: POW 15+, Shiphandling 90%+
Hero Points: 8

When at the helm of a ship, the following effects take place:

☠ Any penalty to your Shiphandling skill is reduced by –20 %. For instance, if the driving rains and slippery ground would normally apply a –40% penalty to your Shiphandling test, the penalty is reduced to –20%.

☠ You may increase your ship's movement by +12 ft./1 knot.

☠ Any Seaworthiness losses are reduced by 1. For example, if the ship would lose 5 Seaworthiness as the result of a storm, then this loss is reduced to 4.

Legendary Abilities

Even historical pirates quickly became legendary figures, their deeds and depravities exaggerated until they became fearsome monsters. They were said to be fearless, impossible to find when hiding, impossible to stop when attacking, or even in league with the Devil. In a cinematic or fantasy game, of course, all that could be true!

Heroic Aura and Crew Combat
The bonus to Persistence and Resilience checks from a character's Heroic Aura applies to a whole crew. The second part of the Legendary Ability, the power to temporarily increase weapon skills does *not*.

Contact
Hero Points: 2
Every time you take this Legendary Ability, you gain a trusted friend on one of the islands of the Caribbean. This friend will shelter you in times of need, pass on rumours and interesting tales to you, receive stolen goods and so forth.

Legendary Abilities

Legendary Ability	Requirements	Hero Points
Always Something to Swing From ᶜ	DEX 15+, Acrobatics 90%+	8
Battle Fury*	CON 15+, close combat Weapon skill 90%+	12
Born to the Saddle*	POW 15+, Riding skill 90%+	8
Born to the Sea	POW 15+, Shiphandling 90%+	8
Contact		2+
Dashing ᶜ	CHA 13+	4
Dead Eye*	DEX 15+, ranged Weapon skill 90%+	10
Decapitating Swing* ᶜ	STR 15+, 2H Sword or Axe skill 90%+	12
Devil's Luck ᶜ	POW 15+	8
Disease Immunity*	CON 15+, Resilience skill 70%+	8
Drowned Man	CON 15+, Athletics 70%	8
Duellist*	1H Weapon or Rapier skill 90%+	10
Fearsome Aura	CHA 15+, any Weapon skill at 70%+	12
Heroic Aura*	CHA 15+, Influence skill 90%+	12
Infamous	Reputation 10+	2
Linguist*	INT 15+, two non-native Language skills 50%+	8
Loremaster*	INT 15+, four Lore skills 50%+	10
Old Salt	Shiphandling or Boating 50%+	2
Pet ᶜ		2+
Poison Immunity* ᶜ	CON 15+, Resilience skill 70%+	8
Powder Monkey	Any Firearms skill at 70%	4
Quick Reload	DEX 15+, any Firearms skill at 70%	8
Skin of the Bear* ᶜ	CON 15+, Resilience skill 90%+	10
Swashbuckler ᶜ	CHA 15+, Rapier 70%+	8
Tireless*	CON 15+, Athletics skill 90%+	8
Wall Leaping* ᶜ	DEX 15+, Acrobatics skill 90%+	10
Vice		2

Abilities marked with a * are to be found in the main *RuneQuest* rulebook.

Abilities marked with a ᶜ are especially suited to a Cinematic campaign.

Dashing
Requirements: CHA 13+
Hero Points: 4
You are especially stylish and charming. You gain a +20% bonus to Influence checks made against female characters (female characters may take a variant of this Legendary Ability called Beautiful, which gives a +20% bonus to Influence checks against male characters).

Devil's Luck
Requirements: POW 15+
Hero Points: 8
You are cursed or blessed with the devil's own luck. This has two abilities:

☠ Whenever you spend a Hero Point to get a Second Chance, you also get a +10% bonus to the re-roll attempt.

☠ When killed, you may put yourself into the Games Master's hands. You will always survive, but your POW is reduced by 1D6 and you will most likely end up in a very dangerous or unpleasant situation.

Drowned Man
Requirements: CON 15+, Athletics 70%
Hero Points: 8
You nearly drowned once, and are now almost a thing of the sea. You may hold your breath for three times longer than normal, and the Resilience check to hold your breath after this period expires does not suffer from a –10% cumulative penalty. Furthermore, any penalties to attacks and actions under water are reduced by 20%.

Fearsome Aura
Requirements: CHA 15+, any Weapon skill at 70%+
Hero Points: 12

All foes within your CHA in yards will be intimidated by your presence, suffering your CHA as a penalty to any Persistence or Resilience tests they are called upon to make.

In addition, you may make take a Combat Action to terrify your nearby enemies, requiring an Opposed Influence versus Persistence test. If this is successful, they suffer your CHA as a penalty to all Weapon skills for the remainder of the Combat Round. This ability only works on the character scale, not on crew scale combat.

Infamous

Requirements: Reputation 10+
Hero Points: 2

Stories of your deeds as a pirate have spread far and wide. Increase your Reputation by +5.

Old Salt

Requirements: Shiphandling or Boating 50%+
Hero Points: 2

You are an especially experienced sailor. You may reduce all penalties due to the movement of a ship by 10%, and increase all your crew's skills by 1%.

Pet

Hero Points: 2

You have a pet monkey, parrot, cat, dog or other animal. This animal is smart enough to follow basic instructions, and will follow you around no matter where you go.

Powder Monkey

Requirements: Any Firearms skill at 70%
Hero Points: 4

You have a knack for using gunpowder. You never suffer misfires when using a firearm.

Quick Reload

Requirements: DEX 15+, any Firearms skill at 70%
Hero Points: 8

You are especially nimble at reloading weapons. Reduce the reload time for all guns and cannons you are using by one-third.

Vice

Hero Points: 2

You have developed another Vice (choose from the list in the Vices section), or increased an existing Vice by one point. You may take this Legendary Ability multiple times.

Vices

'*I soon found that any death was preferable to being linked with such a vile crew of miscreants, to whom it was a sport to do mischief, where prodigious drinking, monstrous cursing and swearing, hideous blasphemies and open defiance of Heaven, and contempt of Hell itself, was the constant employment, unless when something abated the noise and revellings.*'
– from the account of Philip Ashton, captured by pirates in 1722

A freedom to indulge one's lusts and appetites freely is one of the great attractions of the pirate's way. On pirate ships, drink flowed freely, and there was little to do but laze around (pirate ships had far more crew than a merchantman of similar size, so the work was divided

among many hands). When a prize was captured, then the pirates would gamble their winnings away. Of course, more pirates were captured on account of being drunk than any other reason – revels had their costs.

In game terms, a character may take up to two points of Vices at the start of a campaign, and can purchase more by taking the Vice Legendary Ability. A Vice is a particularly strong desire possessed by the character, one that he must indulge. Vices are rated by points; the more points, the stronger the Vice.

Vices have two game effects. Firstly, if the character deliberately indulges his Vice, he gets one Hero Point. A drunkard who searches for a captured ship's rum locker instead of its strongbox, a gambler who willingly throws away all his hard-won silver, a seducer who chases the governor's daughter instead of escaping the town – they all deserve Hero Points as recompense for their stupidity. A character can only indulge his Vice once per point per adventure. So, a character with two

Vice Points in Drunkard could get unnecessarily and inconveniently drunk twice per adventure, and get one Hero Point each time (he could get drunk many more times during the adventure, but only gains a mechanical advantage once per Vice Point).

For example, Fat Pete has three points in, surprisingly, Gluttony. As the characters' ship is sailing along, Fat Pete's player describes in detail how his character has hidden his own supply of food in a barrel, and creeps out at night to gorge himself. This character detail get the player one Hero Point, and he could get another two Hero Points later in the adventure for being gluttonous in other ways.

Secondly, if the character has a chance to indulge his Vice at a time when he does not want to, he must make a Persistence check, penalised by –20% per Vice Point after the first (so, –20% at two Vice Points, –40% at three points, and so forth). If the Persistence check fails, then the character gives into temptation.

The characters are trapped on an island by a Royal

Vices

Avarice – gold and jewels
Blasphemy – offending against God and civility
Bravado – you must be the bravest and most dramatic
Cowardice – you value your life above all else
Cruelty – you delight in torture
Destruction – blowing things up
Drink – wine, whiskey or rum
Freedom – you cannot stand to be constrained
Gambling – dice, cards or whatever comes to hand
Gluttony – either fine food or lots of food
Honour – you have a code of conduct
Lust – women of all sorts
Revenge – against an individual, group or institution
Seduction – the thrill of the chase
Superstition – you fear ghosts and goblins
Piety – you have a deep respect for the divine
Pride – your reputation means everything to you
Wrath – you long for combat

Navy patrol. Soldiers from the ship have landed on the shore and made camp for the night; the pirates are hiding in the nearby jungle. All the characters need to do is wait for the soldiers to fall asleep, and they can either sneak away or attack under cover of darkness. Unfortunately, the soldiers are roasting a wild chicken, and Fat Pete's downwind of that lovely smell. His stomach rumbles incessantly. Fat Pete's player must make a Persistence check at –40% (Fat Pete's a three-point Glutton). If the Persistence check fails, then Fat Pete can stand the hunger no more, and must try to get hold of that chicken somehow.

Indulgence is chosen by the pirate's player; **Temptation** is inflicted by the Games Master.

Some Vices (like Honour) work slightly differently; see individual descriptions below.

Avarice

You desire wealth, especially gold. You go out of your way to find treasure, and hoard it when you do. Avaricious characters cannot resist the lure of plunder.
Indulged by: Looting treasure, counting your gold.
Tempted by: Treasure of all sorts, especially gold and jewels.

Blasphemy

You have quarrelled with God, and hate Him and all His works. You may be an avowed Atheist, or believe yourself to be the Devil's own.
Indulged by: Destroying churches, insulting priests, shocking others with your words.
Tempted by: Especially big ways to offend the Almighty or believers.

Bravado

You are the living embodiment of the pirate myth; a devilish, dashing rogue, and you play to the stereotype.
Indulged by: Witty quips, dramatic entrances.
Tempted by: Showing off to the crowd when fleeing over subtlety would be preferable.

Cowardice

You are a craven rogue, interested only in saving your own skin.
Indulged by: Hanging at the back when it comes to a fight; finding cover; being scared.
Tempted by: Running and fleeing instead of fighting.

Cruelty

You delight in cruelty and torture, and are thoroughly black-hearted and vile.
Indulged by: Being cruel; punishing others.
Tempted by: Chances to be unnecessarily cruel to a defeated foe.

Destruction

No doubt you have all manner of gunpowder bombs and incendiaries about your person, for you love nothing more than fire.
Indulged by: Delighting in blowing things up; setting fire to things; making bombs.
Tempted by: The chance to blow something really big up.

Drink

A powerful thirst for all manner of drink is upon you.
Indulged by: Drinking.
Tempted by: Drinking.

Freedom

You cannot stand to be constrained.
Indulged by: Refusing to obey any law or accepting any limit on your movement.
Tempted by: Thumbing your nose at society; escaping when you really should stay confined.

Gambling

Be it dice, cards or the flight of gulls, you will wager on anything.
Indulged by: Gambling
Tempted by: Gambling

Gluttony

You are always hungry, and gorge yourself whenever you can.
Indulged by: Eating, cooking.
Tempted by: Feasting.

Honour

You refuse to break oaths or contravene your own personal beliefs.
Indulged by: Keeping to your own system of honour.
Tempted by: Holding to your own system of honour, even when it will have dire consequences for you (for example, letting a foe go because you gave your word you would.)

Lust

Your appetite for sexual satisfaction is boundless.
Indulged by: Whoring.
Tempted by: A willing woman.

Revenge

You have a special hatred for a group or individual, and go out of your way to defeat or injure them or their agents.
Indulged by: Slaying agents or foiling the plans of your foe.
Tempted by: Inflicting serious injury on your foe.

Wine, Whiskey & Rum

Common drinks in the age of piracy include rum, punch, wine, whiskey and gin. Grog, a drink associated with pirates in stories, was actually not invented until the 1740s.

A character who drinks excessively must make a Resilience check, penalised by the strength of the drink. Especially potent drinks give a –20% or higher penalty. If the Resilience check is failed, then the character is drunk. A drunk character suffers a –10% penalty on all DEX and INT-based checks, but gains a +10% bonus to Resilience and Persistence checks made to resist harsh conditions like cold or pain, or to resist intimidation. Drunkenness can raise crew morale (see page 32). The modifiers from drunkenness do not apply to further Resilience checks to avoid getting drunker.

An already-drunk character can become Very Drunk (+/– 20% penalty) or Blind Drunk (+/– 40% penalty).

Seduction

You delight in seducing women; your pleasure is not in the conquest (though that is pleasant enough), but in the chase.

Indulged by: Flirtation and seduction.

Tempted by: Inaccessible, haughty or well-born women.

Superstitious

You believe in ghosts, demons and all manner of hostile spirits.

Indulged by: Taking preparations against such horrors; finding relics; observing superstitious traditions.

Tempted by: Fleeing when confronted by anything that might be supernatural.

Piety

Unlike most pirates, you have a great respect for the Church.

Indulged by: Attending or celebrating mass; abhorring blasphemy.

Tempted by: Confession; protecting a church from being looted.

Wrath

You long for combat in all its forms.

Indulged by: Picking fights.

Tempted by: Picking fights you have little chance of winning.

CHATTELS, BLADES & GUNSHOT

While prices for various goods are given in this chapter, much of what a pirate owned would be taken by force. The gold and silver won from captured ships would be spent in the friendly ports like Port Royal or New Providence on drink and women.

Melee Weapons

Belaying Pin: Belaying pins are iron spikes used to secure ropes on board a ship, but they also make excellent improvised weapons. A character using a belaying pin suffers a –10% penalty to hit.

Boarding Axe: Boarding axes are used to cut lines and as a support when climbing, as well as a weapon. A character using a boarding axe gets a +10% bonus to Athletics checks to climbing wooden surfaces.

Boarding Pike: Boarding pikes are cheap spears with a hooked end. A character using a boarding pike gets a +10% bonus to Athletics checks when making boarding actions.

Buckler: This duelling shield is the only shield still in common use in the age of piracy.

Currency

Prices are given in reales, silver Spanish coins. Spanish doubloons and pieces of eight are more commonly used by pirates. Doubloons are gold coins; silver pieces of eight are worth a quarter of a doubloon, or eight reales.

1 doubloon = 4 pieces of eight = 32 reales

Characters may also encounter English crowns, shillings and pence, or Dutch ducats, daalders and florins.

Cat o'nine tails: A heavy, nine-tongued whip used as a punishment device.

Club: Or a tree branch, bar stool, piece of timber, crowbar…

Cutlass: A cutlass is a heavy curved sword, short enough to be used on board a ship without getting tangled in the ever-present ropes and lines, but sharp and strong enough to cut through a foe. Cutlasses are used by navies the world over. Its basket hilt gives a +10% bonus to Parry checks.

Dagger: A long knife, balanced for throwing.

Dirk: Slightly larger and more damaging than a dagger, dirks suffer a –10% penalty to Parry attempts.

Halberd: Polearms like this are common weapons for guards and soldiers in forts.

Hatchet: Mainly used for hewing wood or cutting through jungle, but still a lethal weapon.

Knife: A simple knife.

Quarterstaff: Rarely used as a weapon, but still easy to make and obtain.

Rapier: A duelling rapier. Weapons like this are often of exceptional quality.

Scimitar: A wickedly curved sword, more common in Moslem lands than in the west. The infamous Barbary pirates may use such blades.

Spear: From weapons used by wild natives to improved spears.

Shortsword: Commonly used in combination with another blade by a duellist.

Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Belaying Pin	Dagger[5]	1D4	5/5	1	4/6	5 reales
Boarding Axe	1H Axe[5]	1D6	7/5	2	3/6	20 reales
Boarding Pike	Polearm	1D8	5/5	2	3/8	15 reales
Bill	Polearm[2]	1D6+1	7/9	2	2/8	50 reales
Buckler	Shield	1D4	–/5	1	5/8	50 reales
Cat o'nine tails	Whip	1D4	5/9	1	0/3	50 reales
Club	1H Hammer	1D6	7/	1	2/4	5 reales
Cutlass	1H Sword[5]	1D6+1	6/7	1	3/9	200 reales
Dagger	Dagger[4, 5]	1D4+1	–/–	—	4/6	30 reales
Dirk	Dagger[5]	1D3+2	–/–	1	3/8	50 reales
Halberd	2H Axe	1D8+2	13/7	4	3/10	50 reales
	Polearm[2]	1D8+1	9/9			
	Spear[1, 2]	1D8	7/7			
Hatchet	1H Axe[4, 5]	1D6	–/9	1	3/6	25 reales
Knife	Dagger[5]	1D3	–/–	—	4/4	10 reales
Quarterstaff	Staff	1D8	7/7	2	3/8	20 reales
Rapier	Rapier[1]	1D8	7/13	1	3/8	100 reales
Scimitar	1H Sword	1D6+1	7/11	2	4/10	200 reales
Spear	Spear[1, 2, 4]	1D8	5/5	2	2/5	20 reales
Shortsword	1H Sword[1, 5]	1D6	5/7	1	3/8	80 reales
Tomahawk	1H Axe[4, 5]	1D6	7/13	1	3/4	25 reales
Unarmed	Unarmed[5]	1D3	–/–	—	–/–	—
Whip	Whip	1D3	–/9	1	0/3	25 reales

[1] This weapon will impale an opponent upon a critical hit.

[2] This weapon may be set against a charge.

[3] This weapon may parry ranged weapons.

[4] This weapon suffers no penalty when thrown.

[5] This weapon can be used in cramped conditions without penalty. See page 58.

Tomahawk: Adapted from the Native American weapon of the same name, a tomahawk is a small, well-balanced axe that can be thrown.

Whip: A length of leather more commonly used to goad slaves than as a weapon.

Whips can be used in three different ways:

☠ **As a direct attack** on any foe within 10 feet (2 metres). A whip cannot be used on an adjacent target. Such attacks use the normal rules.

☠ **As a grapple attack** on any foe within 10 feet (2 metres). If the grapple attack succeeds, then the attacker may immediately make a Throw or Incapacitate attack, but the two are not considered to be grappling. If the defender is allowed Riposte and the whip wielder is out of range, then the defender may instead choose to try to wrench the whip out of the attacker's hand (use an opposed Athletics (*Brute Force*) check to determine who wins).

☠ **As a short rope**, for swinging off masts and grabbing onto railings. In certain situations, the Whip skill can be substituted for the Acrobatics skill.

Gunpowder

Gunpowder is carried in either a powder horn or in prepared paper packets. It must be loaded into the gun along with wadding and shot.

On a 00 (fumble), then the gun has misfired and must be loaded from scratch. On a 96-99, then the gun has simply failed to fire.

If a gun is not properly maintained, then the gun's chance to misfire or fail increases. This can also happen with improperly stored power.

If powder gets wet, then the misfire chance doubles at the very least, and may increase further. Soaked powder is almost certain not to function.

Normal Weapon	Poorly Maintained Weapon	Damp Conditions	Soaked Conditions
00 – Misfire	96-00 – Misfire	00 – Misfire	00 – Misfire
99-96 – Fail	90-95 – Fail	80-99 – Fail	50-99 – Fail
>skill – Miss	>skill – Miss	>skill – Miss	>skill – Miss
<skill – Hit	<skill – Hit	<skill – Hit	<skill – Hit

Gunpowder Explosions

Gunpowder fuses can be made using the Artillery skill, or just improved by making an INT+DEX check.

A powder horn will explode for 2D4 damage, or an improvised bomb for 1D4x1D4 damage.

A barrel of gunpowder deals 6D6 damage if it explodes.

Blunderbuss: Blunderbuss weapons fire a hail of shot, or can even be loaded with scrap and nails. They are rather inaccurate, but devastating at close range. Blunderbusses suffer a –20% penalty to hit at long range, but do an extra 1D6 damage at short range.

Grenade: Grenades are bottles or iron casks filled with powder and metal, which explode violently. They are commonly used in boarding actions, scattering an enemy crew before the pirates attack.

Musket: Muskets fire a heavy lead ball. They are the commonest firearm in this era.

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Load	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Blowgun	Blowgun	1D2	45 ft.	1	–/9	—	1/4	30 reales
Blunderbuss	Longarms	2D8	60 ft.	12	–/5	1	4/8[3]	100 reales
Dagger[2]	Dagger or Throwing	1D6	30 ft.	—	–/9	—	4/6	30 reales
Grenade	Throwing	1D4 x D6	30 ft.	—	–/–	—	2/1[4]	5 reales
Hatchet[2]	1H Axe or Throwing	1D6	30 ft.	—	7/11	1	3/6	25 reales
Musket[1]	Longarms	2D6	100 ft.	6	–/9	2	4/8[3]	150 reales
Pistol[1]	Pistol	2D4	40 ft.	6	–/5	1	3/6[3]	250 reales
Pistol, Blunderbuss	Pistol	2D6	20 ft.	8	–/–	1	3/6[3]	350 reales
Pistol, Pocket[1]	Pistol	2D3	20 ft.	6	–/9	1	3/6[3]	350 reales
Rifle[1]	Longarms	2D6	160 ft.	6	–/9	2	4/8[3]	1,000 reales
Rock/improvised	Throwing	1D3	30 ft.	—	5/9	1	3/5	—
Short bow[1]	Bow	1D8	180 ft.	1	9/11	1	2/4	75 reales
Spear[1, 2]	Spear or Throwing	1D8	75 ft.	—	5/9	2	2/5	20 reales
Throwing star	Throwing	1D4	45 ft.	—	–/13	—	4/1	15 reales

[1] This weapon will impale an opponent upon a critical hit.
[2] This weapon suffers no penalty when used in close combat.
[3] Parrying with a firearm can damage the internal mechanisms – the weapon counts as being poorly maintained if used to parry an attack.
[4] Parrying with a grenade is pretty much the *definition* of 'a really bad idea'.

Pistol: Pistols are smaller versions of muskets. Most pirates have at least a pair of pistols, and some carry four or five, so they can keep firing without needing to stop and reload.

Pistol, Blunderbuss: A blunderbuss pistol is a wide mouthed gun that works just like its larger cousin. It suffers a –20% penalty to hit at long range, but does an extra 1D4 damage at close range.

Pistol, Pocket: Pocket pistols are small enough to be concealed, and are generally seen as a coward's gun or a hold-out weapon. A character can hide a pocket pistol inside a pocket or secret compartment.

Rifle: Rifles are a new form of musket; grooves are carved into the inner surface of the barrel, making the shot spin when fired, resulting in a more accurate attack. Effectively, a rifle is an Exceptional-quality musket, effect giving a +10% bonus to hit.

Ammunition

Item	Cost
12 Powder & Shot, Pistol	2 reales
12 Powder & Shot, Blunderbuss Pistol	4 reales
12 Powder & Shot, Blunderbuss	5 reales
12 Powder & Shot, Musket	2 reales

Armour & Clothing

Armour is used sparingly in this era, as most firearms are powerful enough to punch through the heavy plate and chain of previous centuries.

Duellists Half-Cape: This is a length of flexible cloth that is often cut into a draped cape of sorts that hangs over the chest and unused arm during a swordfight. A number of stiff leather strips are sewn into the cape here and there, giving additional protection to the areas they cover. The half-cape's construction allows it to be twirled over one arm or the other as a Combat Reaction. This adds the cape's Armour Points to the covered arm if desired. Also, if taken from around the chest and held in one hand, the half-cape can be used like a buckler – offering no AP protection, but allowing a +10% bonus to Parry skill tests.

Buff Coat: A heavy jacket, commonly worn by sailors.

Pitch Jacket: A linen shirt or jacket, covered with hardened pitch. Easy to improvise on board a ship.

Breastplate: Some soldiers wear still metal breastplates as a defence against enemy blades.

Clothing

Item	Cost
Poor-quality clothes	3 reales
Pirate clothes	5 reales
Average clothes	25 reales
Fine clothes	120 reales
Very fine clothes	1,200 reales
Magnificent clothes	1,500 reales
Hat	10 reales
Good boots	50 reales
Officer's Uniform	80 reales
Priest's robe	20 reales
Powdered Wig	20 reales

Pirates wear a gaudy mish-mash of clothing, ranging from rags to fine jackets and boots taken from the dead, together with head-scarves, gold jewellery, and all manner of trinkets, curios and charms.

Armour

Armour	AP	ENC	Locations	Cost	Total Skill Penalty
Duellist's Half-Cape	2	1	Chest, Arm (wearer's choice)	200 reales	–2%
Buff Coat	1	2	Chest, Arms, Abdomen	150 reales	–3%
Pitch Jacket	3	2	Chest, Abdomen	10 reales	–6%
Breastplate	6	4	Chest, Abdomen	1,000 reales	–12%
Helmet	5	1	Head	300 reales	–4%

Clothes Maketh The Man

When dealing with the aristocracy and the authorities, fine clothes are a requirement. A character suffers a modifier to all Courtesy and Influence checks depending on his dress in any encounter with wealthy, respectable types in civilised surroundings (obviously, Influence works very differently if the wealthy gent with his fine powdered wig is kneeling on the deck with a cutlass at his throat).

Garb	Modifier
Pirate's clothes	–50%
Poor clothes	–25%
Average clothes	–10%
Fine clothes	+0%
Very fine clothes	+10%
Magnificent clothes	+25%

Food & Drink

Item	Cost
Meal, Fine	30 reales
Meal, Good	15 reales
Meal, Average	3 reales
Meal, Poor	1 reales
Bread	¼ reales
Chicken	3 reales
Pig	35 reales
Ale	¼ reales
Rum	30 reales
Wine, cheap	5 reales
Wine, good	½ reales

Equipment

Item	Cost
Compass	150 reales
Logbook	15 reales
Pocket watch	25 reales
Telescope	1500 reales
Parrot	150 reales
Eye patch	5 reales
Peg Leg	50 reales
Hook Hand	150 reales

Professional Tools

Item	Cost
Navigator's Instruments	650 reales
Shipwright's Tools	250 reales
Surgeon's Kit	600 reales

CREWS & SWORN COMPANIONS

A pirate crew is a brotherhood of rogues, united by a common desire for plunder. They are not a disciplined military unit, nor do they give false respect to lords and rich men. There is no authority among them save the authority they give their leaders. A pirate crew is more of a democracy, where each man has his say. Important decisions are made by a vote of all the pirates; the captain really has authority only in battle. Just as important as the captain is the quartermaster, who represents the crew's needs to the captain, leads boarding actions, and settles disputes. Officers are also elected to command parts of the crew in battle; most crews will have a gunner, a boatswain, a carpenter, a cook and a mate or two.

Of course, the size of a crew varies wildly. A small ship like a sloop might have only a dozen pirates aboard, but a mighty galleon would be crewed by hundreds of rogues – and a pirate ship that big is no doubt accompanied by a consort vessel or three, making her captain a pirate admiral.

Crew Quality

In *Pirates*, the quality of a crew counts for much. An experienced gang of dangerous pirates will obviously outfight or out sail a few green merchant seamen, but would still turn tail and run when confronted by the best ship in the Royal Navy.

Crew qualities range from Atrocious to Peerless. Each crew quality has a percentile value associated with it, which is the crew's basic skill level. This is the average skill level of the crew when it comes to making a skill check for the whole ship. Individual sailors may have a skill that is far higher or lower than this average, but crew skill checks are made for a whole crew.

Crew Quality	Base Skill
Atrocious (Landlubbers)	15%
Very Poor (Green)	25%
Poor (Scurvy Dogs)	40%
Average (Passing Fair)	50%
Good (Sea Dogs)	60%
Excellent (Devilish Cut-throats)	75%
Fearsome (Most Notorious Pirates)	100%
Peerless (Devils Straight From Hell)	150%

While this base skill can be used for any skill check made by the crew, a few skills are obviously much more important for a piratical band. Skills like Shiphandling, Boating, Gunnery or throat-cutting are of more use to a pirate crew than being able to dance or speak prettily. Having a good quartermaster leading a ship's boarding party or a canny gunner in charge of the powder kegs can make all the difference in a battle. Therefore, a crew gets bonuses from having skilled officers in positions of authority.

Choice Men and Reduced Crews

A crew's quality is the average of the pirates' skills. Now, some lazy sod or clumsy fool will drag that average down, just as an especially hardy sailor or iron-nerved cannoneer will bring the total up. In a given crew, then, it is possible to pick the best men and come up with a smaller crew of a higher average skill. On average, 10% of a crew will be one quality rank higher, and 10% will be one quality rank lower. So, for a Poor crew, 10% will be Very Poor and 10% will be Average.

Starting Crews

Starting characters will just be ordinary deckhands on board their new ship, but they are still on the account and so get their voice in the running of the ship.

Unless the Games Master dictates otherwise, then the characters start as part of a Poor crew, with a NPC captain and quartermaster, on board a sloop.

It is possible, obviously, to improve a crew by taking the best sailors from other crews, and getting rid of your own unskilled dogs. Pirates often raid the hardy crews of the Newfoundland fishing boats for new recruits.

Officer	Crew Skill
Captain	Shiphandling
	Persistence
	Adds to morale
Quartermaster	Hand to Hand[1]
	Resilience
Boatswain	Boating
Gunner	Gunnery
	Firearms[2]
Cook	Adds to morale
Carpenter's Mate	Handiwork
Doctor	Adds to healing
Master	Lore (navigation)
Musician	Perform
First Mate	Any one
Second Mate	Any one

[1]The Quartermaster may choose any one melee weapon to determine the bonus he gives the crew.
[2]The Gunner may choose either his Pistols or Longarms skill to determine the bonus he gives the crew.

Pirate Flags

While the skull-and-crossbones is the traditional pirate flag, it was not the only flag used. Every captain had his own unique flag, a barbaric coat of arms that everyone will recognise. Pirate flags used a combination of symbols of death, like skulls, hourglasses, bloody swords and so on. A newly elected captain should choose the flag he will sail under.

The crew skill gets a bonus equal to one-tenth the skill total of the appropriate officer. For example, if a Gunner has a Gunnery skill of 70%, then the crew gets a bonus of +7% to all Gunnery crew checks. A Poor crew has a base skill of 40%, plus 7% for the leadership provided by their good gunner, so they would have an effective Gunnery of 47%.

Crew Skill Checks

A crew skill check is made whenever the whole crew must act as one. They work in exactly the same way as a normal skill check – roll percentile dice and try to get under the crew's skill total. For example, when firing a broadside of cannons then the crew must make a Gunnery check.

The Games Master makes all crew checks for opposing crews.

For Player Character ships, if one of the Player Characters is an officer, then he may make crew checks for those skills in his officer's purview. If not, then any player may make the check.

Crew Skill Checks & Hero Points: Hero Points can be spent to re-roll crew checks, but it costs *three* Hero Points to re-roll such a check, not just one. Several Player Characters can join together to pay this Hero Point cost for a re-roll.

Morale

The other major factor in a crew is morale – how much stomach they have for a fight, and how much belief they have in their captain and the course he has set. Morale is bolstered by victories and plunder, and sapped by defeat, dullness or adversity. Morale checks must often be made in battle (see page 65).

Morale is rated in levels. A Crew's morale can be Fanatic, Very High, High, Average, Shaken, Low or Mutinous.

Morale is calculated at the start of a voyage, as follows:

Crew Quality	Base Morale
Atrocious	Low
Very Poor	Shaken
Poor	Shaken
Average	Average
Good	Average
Excellent	High
Fearsome	High
Peerless	Very High

Add the following factors to that base morale:

☠ If the captain has a Charisma of 15 or higher, increase the crew's morale by one level.

☠ If the cook has a Cooking skill of 50% or higher, increase the crew's morale by one level.

☠ If the musician has a Perform skill of 50% or higher, increase the crew's morale by one level.

Morale is also recalculated if the captain is replaced.

Morale will rise and fall very quickly during voyages. See Piracy & Plunder, page 49, for more details on events at sea.

Morale Checks

Certain situations will call for a Morale check, which is made using the Crew's Persistence score. If this check is failed, then the crew's nerve has faltered, and they lose one level of Morale. On a critical success, the crew is galvanised by the challenge, and gains one level of Morale.

The Games Master makes all Morale checks.

Hero Points may be spent to re-roll Morale checks – it costs the Player Characters 3 Hero Points to get such a re-roll.

Morale Bonuses

A crew gets a bonus to all Crew Checks based on its morale. This morale bonus can be a very useful edge in a fight between evenly matched crews.

Morale	Modifier to Crew Checks
Mutinous	−10%
Low	−5%
Shaken	+0%
Average	+0%
High	+0%
Very High	+5%
Fanatic	+10%

Going On The Account

To 'go on the account' means to become a pirate and join a pirate crew. The majority of pirates joined such crews voluntarily, hoping for little work but rich rewards, or they were running from something and had nowhere else to go. One may as well be hung for being a pirate as for being a murderer or a thief. Others were press-ganged into joining a pirate crew; when the merchant ship you serve on is taken as a prize, and the choice is between joining the rogues and a knife in the gut, only the most principled man would not join the pirates.

Every pirate crew has its own articles that every man among them must sign to. One famous set of articles, used by the crew of Captain Roberts, ran as follows:

ARTICLE I. Every man shall have an equal vote in affairs of moment. He shall have an equal title to the fresh provisions or strong liquors at any time seized, and shall use them at pleasure unless a scarcity may make it necessary for the common good that a retrenchment may be voted.

ARTICLE II. Every man shall be called fairly in turn by the list on board of prizes, because over and above their proper share, they are allowed a shift of clothes. But if they defraud the company to the value of even one dollar in plate, jewels or money, they shall be marooned. If any man rob another he shall have his nose and ears slit, and be put ashore where he shall be sure to encounter hardships.

ARTICLE III. None shall game for money either with dice or cards.

ARTICLE IV. The lights and candles should be put out at eight at night, and if any of the crew desire to drink after that hour they shall sit upon the open deck without lights.

ARTICLE V. Each man shall keep his piece, cutlass and pistols at all times clean and ready for action.

ARTICLE VI. No boy or woman to be allowed amongst them. If any man shall be found seducing any of the latter sex and carrying her to sea in disguise he shall suffer death.

ARTICLE VII. He that shall desert the ship or his quarters in time of battle shall be punished by death or marooning.

ARTICLE VIII. None shall strike another on board the ship, but every man's quarrel shall be ended on shore by sword or pistol in this manner. At the word of command from the quartermaster, each man being previously placed back to back, shall turn and fire immediately. If any man do not, the quartermaster shall knock the piece out of his hand. If both miss their aim they shall take to their cutlasses, and he that draweth first blood shall be declared the victor.

ARTICLE IX. No man shall talk of breaking up their way of living till each has a share of £1,000. Every man who shall become a cripple or lose a limb in the service shall have 800 pieces of eight from the common stock and for lesser hurts proportionately.

ARTICLE X. The captain and the quartermaster shall each receive two shares of a prize, the master gunner and boatswain, one and one half shares, all other officers one and one quarter, and private gentlemen of fortune one share each.

ARTICLE XI. The musicians shall have rest on the Sabbath Day only by right. On all other days by favour only.

Every pirate ship will have its own articles, agreed upon and kept to by the crew.

Elections

A character's Reputation determines how much influence has on board ship. Most ordinary deckhands will just follow the character with the highest Reputation, or who has won their trust. In any contest of influence on board ship, follow this procedure:

Step One

Start by determining who the contenders are. For example, if there are two characters on board who hope to be quartermaster, then these two are the contenders. If the characters are trying to convince the crew that the captain should be removed, then the captain and one of the characters are the contenders.

Next, the positions of the rest of the crew must be considered.

Step Two

Remove from consideration all members of the crew whose Reputation is less than half that of the highest Reputation on board ship. Effectively, this will remove all but the officers and other highly influential pirates on board. For example, if the captain has Reputation 16, then anyone with a Reputation of less than eight is simply irrelevant in terms of sway.

Step Three

Of those crewmen remaining after step two, determine who each of them supports whom. Add *half* their Reputation scores, rounding down, to the Reputation score of the contender they support. This total score is referred to as a character's Sway in the election.

Step Four

Finally, each contender rolls 1D10 and adds it to their score. The contender with the highest score wins the contest. In certain circumstances, a dramatic speech or other act to inspire loyalty, like bribery, can give the character a further bonus to Sway.

Some positions (see below) give a temporary Reputation bonus. This bonus is applied immediately.

Captain of Shreds and Patches

The pirate ship *Greywater* has gone to the bottom, along with most of her crew. However, twelve pirates managed to escape on board a battered boat, and now they are arguing amongst themselves over who is in charge. Their Reputation scores are important for this contest, so here they are:

Pirate	Reputation
Pete the Scoundrel	8
One-Eyed Joe	6
Mart Roberts	6
Alan Fairhands	5
French Lou	5
Rest of the pirates	0-3

Pete the Scoundrel, a notorious murderer, and One-Eyed Joe are both in contention to be captain. As Pete has Reputation 8, anyone with Reputation 4 or less is irrelevant.

Next, it must be determined who the other pirates will support. While Pete is well known as a killer, few of the others trust him; therefore, Mart Roberts and French Lou support One-Eyed Joe, adding half their Reputation score to his. Alan Fairhands supports his old friend Pete.

Pete now has a total Sway of 8+2 = 10. One-Eyed Joe has a total score of 6+3+2 = 11.

Finally, both characters roll 1D10, and with the crew on a knife-edge like that, blind luck will make all the difference. One-Eyed Joe wins, and is elected Captain.

Pete the Scoundrel smiles, and fingers his wickedly sharp knife. One-Eyed Joe, is it? Well, Joe, what you don't see on your left side can still hurt you…

Captains, Quartermasters & Officers

Holding a position of authority on board a ship gives a character more responsibilities and often puts him in a perilous situation, but does also give him more influence among the crew and a greater share of the prize. Every pirate vessel will have a captain and a quartermaster at the very least. If a ship has guns, then it must have a master gunner; if it has boats, it must have a boatswain.

Each officer's position gives extra shares of booty. It may also give a temporary bonus to Reputation, if the character fulfils certain requirements. If these requirements are not met, then the bonus becomes a penalty – a good cook wins the crew's love, but a bad cook causes grumbling and dissent.

An officer also gives a bonus to certain crew skill checks, equal to one-fifth the officer's skill in that category.

Captain: Commands the ship in battle; orders its course; leads the crew. (Note that becoming a captain gives a permanent +4 bonus to Reputation as well as a temporary one – see the Reputation table on page 11). The captain gives a bonus to the crew's Shiphandling, Persistence and Morale.

Quartermaster: Resolves disputes, shares out plunder, leads boarding actions. The quartermaster gives a bonus to all Hand to Hand attacks and to Resilience.

Boatswain: Commands the ship's boats; second in command in boarding actions. The boatswain gives a bonus to Boating.

Gunner: Commands the ship's guns; keeps the armoury. The gunner gives a bonus to Gunnery and Firearms.

Cook: Commands the ship's stores. Gives a bonus to Morale.

Carpenter's Mate: Commands repairs and supplies. Gives a bonus to Craft (carpentry) used when repairing a ship.

Doctor: Sews up wounds and saws off limbs. Gives a bonus to the rate at which a crew heals wounds.

Master: Guides the ship from port to port. Gives a bonus to Navigation.

Musician: Entertains the crew, and adds to Morale. Perform is also used when vapouring to intimidate enemy crews.

First Mate: Present only on large ships (100 crew or more); helps command the crew. Gives a bonus to any one skill.

Second Mate: Present only on very large ships (200 crew or more); helps command the crew. Gives a bonus to any one skill.

Benefits of Rank

Position	Shares of Booty	Requirement	Temporary Reputation Modifier
Captain	5	None	+6
Quartermaster	3	None	+5
Boatswain	1½	Boating 20%	+3
Gunner	1½	Gunnery 20%	+3
Cook	1	Cooking 20%	+4
Carpenter's Mate	1¼	Craft (carpentry) 20%	+2
Doctor	1¼	First Aid 20%	+2
Master	1½	Lore (navigation) 20%	+2
Musician	1	Perform 20%	+2
First Mate	1¼	None	+2
Second Mate	1¼	None	+2

Improvement

Crews gain improvement rolls just like characters, but a crew gains improvement rolls more rarely – on average, a crew gets one roll per story. Crews use improvement rolls just like characters to improve their skills.

A crew improvement roll may also be spent to increase morale by one level.

Mutinies

If a crew's Morale is reduced to Mutinous, then they are prepared to turn on their captain. Roll 1D6 on the following list to determine the crew's reaction:

1. Demand an election.
2. The highest reputation officer challenges the captain to a duel. If no one dares challenge him, roll again.
3. A conspiracy of officers overthrows the captain and chooses one of their own to lead.
4. Wait until another ship is captured, then take that as their own ship.
5. The crew quarrel among themselves, leading to bloody slaughter on the deck.
6. Strand the captain on an island or boat, and hold an election.

Especially intimidating captains can fend off a mutiny for some time. When a crew chooses to mutiny, roll against the captain's Reputation. If the result is lower, then the crew are too scared to rebel for the moment, and will defer their mutiny under the next opportunity, giving the captain a chance to rebuild morale.

Captain of Shreds & Patches, Part II.

To return to those unfortunates on that doomed little boat …

The twelve survivors of the *Greywater* are a Poor crew, but a crew nonetheless, so they shall serve as an example both of the rules for crews and of the folly of evil men. Their Crew Quality is Poor, so they have a Base Crew Skill of 40%.

One-Eyed Joe is their Captain; they elect Mart Roberts as Quartermaster and Alan Fairhands as Boatswain. Without cannons, there is no need for a Gunner, and none of them have the skills to take on any other office.

Crew Skill	%	Officer	Name	Officer Skill
Shiphandling	52	Captain	One Eyed Joe	60%
Persistence	48			40%
Hand to Hand	49	Quartermaster	Mart Roberts	45%
Resilience	46			30%
Boating	50	Boatswain	Alan Fairhands	50%
Gunnery	40	Gunner	None	
Firearms	40			

Raising Morale

There are several ways to raise morale:

☠ Taking a prize: If the pirates capture a ship without significant losses, they gain one level of Morale.

☠ Taking a rich prize: Capturing a ship with a Treasure or Rich Cargo on board also gives one level of Morale.

☠ Getting drunk: Allowing a crew to get properly drunk, or spending time at a port, gives 1D3 levels of morale. A drunken crew suffers a penalty to all Crew Checks.

Battle Stations

In a battle, there are three main tasks – sailing the ship, manning the guns and actually fighting with musket or cutlass. These three crews are handled separately in a battle – see page 68 for more details on crews in battles.

Healing Damage To A Crew

Each week, the crew should make a Resilience check to see how many of the crew are restored to health.

Crew Was…	Failed Check	Successful Check
Wounded	50%	100%
Seriously Wounded	25%	50%
Mauled	10%	25%
Slaughtered	0%	10%

Having a doctor on board ship gives a +20% bonus to the Resilience check.

Recompense For Damage

Each pirate who is injured permanently (i.e. suffers a Major Wound) may claim recompense from the common stores. The amount payable to the crippled man depends on the wound he suffered in action:

Injury	Compensation
Right Arm Lost	600 pieces of eight (4,800 reales)
Left Arm Lost	500 pieces of eight (4,000 reales)
Right Leg Lost	500 pieces of eight (4,000 reales)
Left Leg Lost	400 pieces of eight (3,200 reales)
Eye or Finger Lost	100 pieces of eight (800 reales)

Crew Sheet

Ship: **# of Men:**

                                                  # Injured:

                                                  # Healthy:

Base Skill:

Crew Skill	%	Officer	Name	Officer Skill	Reputation	Bonus Reputation
Shiphandling		Captain				+6
Persistence						
Hand to Hand		Quartermaster[1]				+5
Resilience						
Boating		Boatswain				+3
Gunnery		Gunner				+3
Pistols						
Longarms						
Adds to morale		Cook				+4
Handiwork		Carpenter's Mate[2]				+2
		Doctor				+2
Navigation		Navigator				+2
Perform		Musician				+2
Adds to morale						
		First Mate				+2
		Second Mate				+2

	Morale	Modifier to Crew Checks
	Mutinous	–10%
	Low	–5%
	Shaken	+0%
	Average	+0%
	High	+0%
	Very High	+5%
	Fanatic	+10%

Damage:

Group	Running Wounds Total	Fresh	Wounded (–10%)	Seriously Wounded (–20%)	Mauled (–30%)	Slaughtered (–50%)
Sailing						
Gunnery						
Boarding						

SHIPS & THE SEA

In the Golden Age of Piracy, the largest ships belonged to the navies of the great powers, like England, France and Spain. These warships are rated by the number of guns. Mighty **First-Rate** vessels are more like fortresses than ships, and are never seen in the Caribbean. **Second-** and **Third-Rates** are almost as rare, and even a **Fourth-Rate** vessel is more than a match for any pirate vessel. Most Naval pirate hunting is done by smaller ships, called **frigates**. Such ships carry around twenty or thirty cannons and around a hundred souls on board.

Frigates barely count as Ships of the Line, and are used mainly as couriers and scouts in wartime. **Corvettes** are even smaller than frigates, and are used as escorts and scouts too.

Pirates tend to sail in armed merchant ships. **Sloops** are fast and tough, able to take full advantage of the wind with sails mounted from both the mast and bowsprit. **Schooners** tend to be a little larger than sloops, but have a lesser draft and two masts. As they are able to enter shallower waters, they are especially favoured by smugglers. Finally, **brigantines** are two-masted ships that often carry oars as well as sails; the design was originally so favoured by thieves that the very name means 'brigand's ship'. Towards the end of the Age of Piracy, the word came to refer mainly to a style of rigging. **Barques** are three-masted ships, capable of longer voyages than other vessels.

While both pirates and merchants use sloops, schooners and brigantines, there are other designs of ship that no sensible pirate would use if he could avoid it. **Indiamen** are huge cargo vessels, the backbone of trade between the West Indies and Europe. **Snows** are another type of trader, popular in the North Atlantic. **Fluyts** are another common design.

Spanish **galleons** are a rare sight in this era, but there are still treasure ships bringing the wealth of the South American mines back to Spain. There are also innumerable smaller vessels on the seas, from canoes and rowboats and ship's boats (also called pinnaces) to fishing boats and barges.

The ships described here are average models, but there was a wide variation between different types of ship. The defining quality of a ship was often not its size, but its rigging and hull design. A ship can be up to 50% bigger or smaller than the averages listed, with a commensurate change in Structural Points and guns.

GALLEON
SLOOP
SCHOONER
ROWBOAT
BRIGANTINE
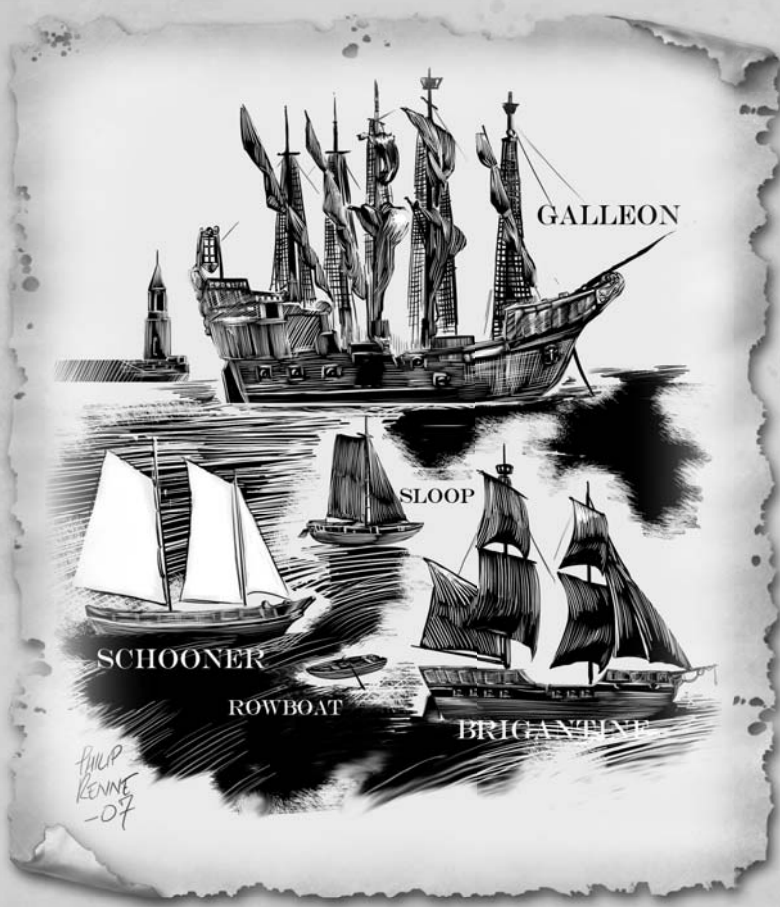
Your Starting Ship

It is assumed that most pirate games will begin with the characters being part of the crew of a sloop – the smallest vessel commonly used by pirates. Roll on the Ship Traits table for more details of the sloop.

Ship Traits

Roll d%	Crew	Provisions	Ammo	Cargo
0-50	10 sailors	None	1D3 tons	None
51-75	40 sailors	1D6 tons	1D4 tons	1D6 tons Common
76-90	60 sailors	2D6 tons	1D6 tons	2D6 tons Common
91-00	80 sailors	4D6 tons	2D4 tons	3D6 tons Common

Ship Statistics

Length: The distance from bow to stern.

Draft: The depth of water needed for the ship to manoeuvre effectively and avoid running aground. This is the distance between the ship's keel and the waterline.

Capacity: This indicates the cargo capacity of the ship in tons. This number reflects the ship's cargo capacity in addition to the weight of the ship's rigging, crew, provisions and so forth.

Overloading

If a ship is carrying more than three-quarters of its maximum cargo capacity, then its draft increases by 25% and it suffers a –10% penalty to Shiphandling checks.

Speed: For rowed vessels, then this lists the speed at which the vessel travels per Crew Combat round (30 seconds, or six normal rounds) or per twelve-hour period. For sailed vessels, then a modifier is listed, describing how much faster or slower than average the vessel goes.

Seaworthiness: The ability of the ship to stand up to the rigours of sailing. All ships must undergo frequent maintenance in order to keep their Seaworthiness rating from deteriorating.

Structure Points: Essentially, Structure Points are a ship's hit points. Damage to these represents damage to the integrity of the ship itself and ships do not heal of their own accord.

Weapons: The weapons carried on the ship.

Crew: The first number is the *minimum* needed to sail the ship without penalty. The second number is the average crew on board such a ship, and the last number is the maximum number of people that the ship can reasonably carry.

A vessel can be sailed as little as one-third the minimum crew – this is called a skeleton crew. More commonly, a captured vessel is given a two-thirds minimum crew, called a prize crew.

Crew Size & Crew Checks

A skeleton crew suffers a –20% penalty to all Shiphandling and other crew checks.

A prize crew suffers a –10% penalty to all Shiphandling and other crew checks.

An over-crewed ship gets a +10% bonus to all Shiphandling and other appropriate crew checks.

Skill: Every ship has its own peculiarities and each design presents different challenges. This entry firstly denotes which skill is used when operating the ship (nearly always either Boating or Shiphandling). Also, though any ship can be operated under ideal conditions without the necessity of a skill test, when the ship and crew are called upon for more extreme endeavours, this modifier is applied to the skill test. Note that this modifier is in addition to any others the Games Master feels are appropriate.

Changes from the *RuneQuest Companion*

The ship rules in *RuneQuest Pirates* are based on those in the *RuneQuest Companion*, but have a few key differences to reflect different priorities and the different settings. *RuneQuest* assumes a fantasy-medieval setting, with ships that are quite different from the sloops and schooners of the Spanish Main.

☠ **Measurements are in Imperial, not Metric:** Having pirates measure speed in kilometres instead of knots, or talk about a ship being so many metres long just seems wrong, so imperial measurements are used. ('*Avast, ye dogs, and fire the 16-kilo cannons!*')

☠ **Speed works slightly differently:** There is a bigger emphasis on sailing speed and wind in *RuneQuest Pirates*, so a sailed ship's speed is measured as a bonus or penalty.

Barge

Hull: 3
Structure Points: 80
Seaworthiness: 10
Length: 4 ft.
Draft: 1 ft.
Capacity: 12 tons
Crew: 2/4/12
Speed: 18 ft. / 3 knots, poled.
Weapons: None
Masts: None
Skill: Boating +0%

Barque

Hull: 4
Structure Points: 100
Seaworthiness: 25
Length: 80 ft.
Draft: 10 ft.
Capacity: 80 tons
Crew: 15/30/60
Speed: +0
Weapons
Fore: None
Aft: None
Broadside: Eight 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling +0%

Brigantine

Hull: 4
Structure Points: 250
Seaworthiness: 15
Length: 100 ft.
Draft: 15 ft.
Capacity: 100 tons
Crew: 30/60/120
Speed: +0
Weapons
Fore: None
Aft: Four 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Broadside: Ten 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling +0%

Canoe

The statistics for this 'dugout' canoe are placed in parentheses after the statistics for the hide canoe.
Hull: 1 (2)
Structure Points: 4 (6)
Seaworthiness: 7
Length: 12ft
Draft: 1 ft.
Capacity: 0.25 tons
Crew: 1–2 rowers
Speed: 72ft. / 12 knots paddled
Weapons: None
Skill: Boating +20%

Corvette

Hull: 4
Structure Points: 150
Seaworthiness: 18
Length: 60 ft.
Draft: 10 ft.
Capacity: 40 tons
Crew: 15/50/80
Speed: +6 feet/+1 knot
Weapons:
Fore: Two 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Broadside: Eight 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling +0%

Fishing Boat

Hull: 3
Structure Points: 100
Seaworthiness: 18
Length: 25 ft.
Draft: 5 ft.
Capacity: 10 tons
Crew: 3/5/20
Speed: +12 ft./+2 knots
Weapons
Fore: None
Aft: None
Broadside: None
Skill: Boating +0%

Fluyt

Hull: 54
Structure Points: 200
Seaworthiness: 18
Length: 160 ft.
Draft: 30 ft.
Capacity: 250 tons
Crew: 20/40/120
Speed: –18 ft./–3 knots
Weapons
Fore: None
Aft: Four 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Broadside: Eight 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling –10%

Frigate

Hull: 5
Structure Points: 180
Seaworthiness: 20
Length: 90 ft.
Draft: 10 ft.
Capacity: 80 tons
Crew: 20/60/120
Speed: +12 ft./2 knots
Weapons
Fore: Two 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Aft: Two 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Broadside: Ten 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling +10%

Galleon

Hull: 5
Structure Points: 300
Seaworthiness: 20
Length: 200 ft.
Draft: 30 ft.
Capacity: 250 tons
Crew: 80/160/320
Speed: –18 ft./–3 knots
Weapons
Fore: Four 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Aft: Eight 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Broadside: Sixteen 18-pounders (4D8 each), Sixteen 24-pounders (4D10 each)
Skill: Shiphandling –10%

Indiaman

Hull: 4
Structure Points: 300
Seaworthiness: 15
Length: 175 ft.
Draft: 24 ft.
Capacity: 300 tons
Crew: 50/200/300
Speed: –24 ft./–4 knots
Weapons
Fore: Four 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Aft: Six 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Broadside: Twenty-four 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling –10%

Raft

Hull: 1
Structure Points: 40
Seaworthiness: 10
Length: 12 ft.
Draft: 1 ft.
Capacity: 4 tons
Crew: 2 polemen
Speed: 18 ft. / 3 knots, poled
Weapons: None
Skill: Boating –10%

Rowboat

Hull: 2
Structure Points: 15
Seaworthiness: 15
Length: 15 ft.
Draft: 1 ft.
Capacity: 0.5 tons
Crew: 1 rower
Speed: 36 ft./ 3 knots, rowed
Weapons: None
Modifier: Boating +0%

Schooner

Hull: 4
Structure Points: 180
Seaworthiness: 20
Length: 90 ft.
Draft: 10 ft.
Capacity: 100 tons
Crew: 15/50/100
Speed: +0
Weapons
Fore: Two 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Aft: Two 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Broadside: Ten 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling +10%

Small Trader

Hull: 3
Structure Points: 100
Seaworthiness: 18
Length: 40 ft.
Draft: 10 ft.
Capacity: 40 tons
Crew: 5/10/20
Speed: +0
Weapons
Fore: None
Aft: None
Broadside: None
Skill: Shiphandling +0%

Sloop

Hull: 4
Structure Points: 120
Seaworthiness: 20
Length: 60 ft.
Draft: 10 ft.
Capacity: 50 tons
Crew: 10/40/75
Speed: +6 feet/+2 knots
Weapons
Broadside: Eight 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling +10%

Snow

Hull: 4
Structure Points: 220
Seaworthiness: 18
Length: 100 ft.
Draft: 15 ft.
Capacity: 120 tons
Crew: 30/60/120
Speed: +6 ft/1 knot
Weapons
Fore: None
Aft: Four 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Broadside: Ten 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling –10%

Warship

Hull: 5
Structure Points: 250
Seaworthiness: 20
Length: 150 ft.
Draft: 30 ft.
Capacity: 100 tons
Crew: 30/120/200
Speed: +12 ft./2 knots
Weapons
Fore: Four 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Aft: Four 9-pounders (4D6 each)
Broadside: Twenty 18-pounders (4D8 each)
Skill: Shiphandling +10%

Ship Qualities: Optional Rule

To add character to a ship, qualities can be used. These are quirks of a ship's design that improve or hinder its performance. It is impossible to add or remove a quality from a ship; they are simply part of the way it is.

Agile:	+10% to all Shiphandling checks in battle	**Battleshy:**	–10% to all Gunnery checks
Defiant:	+10% to all Gunnery checks	**Clumsy:**	–10% to all Shiphandling checks in battle
Good:	+5% to all Crew Checks	**Cursed:**	Games Master may force crew to re-roll one successful Crew check per day
Lucky:	Re-roll one failed Crew check per day	**Distinctive:**	–10% to all Shiphandling checks to avoid detection
Nimble:	+10% to all Shiphandling checks; –1 foot draft	**Fragile:**	–1 Hull
Reliable:	+10% to all Handiwork checks	**Foul:**	+10% to all Crew Resilience checks
Stealthy:	+10% to all Shiphandling checks to avoid detection	**Ill:**	–5% to all Crew Checks
Sturdy:	+1 Hull	**Unreliable:**	–10% to all Handiwork checks
Sweet:	+10% to all Crew Resilience checks	**Slow:**	–6 ft./–1 knot movement
Swift:	+6 ft./+1 knot Movement	**Sluggish:**	–10% to all Shiphandling checks; +1 foot draft

Movement

Rowing

Each vessel capable of movement by rowing or poling has a Speed entry in its description. This is the ship's base Movement in normal operating conditions. Rowing a vessel at this normal speed counts as medium activity for determining Fatigue.

The vessel can be slowed to half speed, which counts only as light activity for the rowers to maintain. The speed of the vessel can also be doubled, a gruelling activity which counts as heavy activity for the rowers.

If the vessel is operating against a fresh gale or heavier wind, the level of activity is increased by one step. Thus moving at half speed counts as medium activity, moving at normal speed counts as heavy activity and the vessel cannot move at double speed.

That said, if the vessel is operating before a fresh gale or heavier wind, the level of activity is decreased by one step. Thus moving at normal speed counts as light activity and moving at double speed counts as medium activity.

Wind Speed: The speed of the prevailing winds.

Against: The vessel is moving against or perpendicular to the direction of the wind.

Before: The vessel is moving with the prevailing winds.

Skill Modifier: The modifier to the Boating skill imposed by the winds. This modifier is in addition to the modifiers of the ship itself and any others the Games Master feels are appropriate.

Sailing

Sails offer some significant advantages over rowing. A sailing ship requires a much smaller crew, for example, and the ship relies on wind, rather than broad backs, for its propulsion.

The speed of a sailing ship depends upon the angle of the wind in relation to the ship, as well as the speed of the wind itself. For the sake of simplicity, these rules incorporate four wind directions: before the wind, quarter wind, half wind and head wind.

Before the Wind: The wind is coming directly from the stern of the ship toward the bow.

Quarter Wind: The wind is blowing against one of the ship's rear quarters, at a roughly 45 degree angle to the length of the ship.

Half Wind: The wind is blowing across the ship, at a roughly 90 degree angle to the length of the ship.

Head Wind: The wind is blowing directly from the bow of the ship toward the stern.

The Sailing Speed table gives the speed a sailing ship will travel under different wind speeds, presented in the following manner: Speed per Crew Combat Round / Speed per 12 hour period.

Rowing & Wind

Wind Speed	Against	Before	Skill Modifier
Calm	—	—	—
Light Wind	—	—	—
Moderate Wind	Slight Adversity (–25% Speed)	Slight Adversity (–25% Speed)	—
Stiff Wind	Slight Adversity (–25% Speed)	Slight Adversity (–25% Speed)	–10%
Fresh Gale	Moderate Adversity (–50% Speed)	Moderate Adversity (–50% Speed)	–20%
Full Gale	Great Adversity (–75% Speed)	Great Adversity (–75% Speed)	–40%
Hurricane	*	*	–60%

* Rowing vessels cannot make headway in a hurricane.

Sailing Speed

Wind Speed	Before the Wind	Quarter Wind	Half Wind	Head Wind	Skill Modifier
Calm	3 ft. / 6 miles	—	—	—	0%
Light Wind	9 ft. / 18 miles	6 ft. / 12 miles	3 ft. / 6 miles	—	0%
Moderate Wind	15 ft. / 30 miles	12 ft. / 24 miles	9 ft. / 18 miles	3 ft./ 6 miles	0%
Stiff Wind	21 ft. / 42 miles	18 ft. / 36 miles	15 ft. / 30 miles	6 ft. / 12 miles	–10%
Fresh Gale	27 ft. / 54 miles	24 ft. / 48 miles	21 ft. / 42 miles	9 ft. / 18 miles	–20%
Full Gale	*	*	*	*	–40%
Hurricane	*	*	*	*	–60%

*The winds of a full gale or a hurricane will shred a ship's rigging. In such a situation, the best that can be done is to deploy a small amount of sailcloth to keep the ship steady and hope to ride out the storm. Alternatively, the truly reckless or desperate may press onward, at the same speed as a fresh gale but with double the normal skill penalty.

The rules assume all sailing ships travel at roughly the same speed, the heavier ships using more sails to offset their weight. In the event of one ship chasing another, the outcome of the race will depend upon the Boating or Shiphandling skills of the captains of either ship, and on the ship's design and rigging.

Sail Modifiers

With a successful Shiphandling check, a crew can change the sails currently deployed by a ship. Different configurations of sail give different results:

Sail	Speed Modifier	Other Effects
None	No movement	None
Minimum	–25 ft.	None
Fighting	–10 ft.	+10% to Shiphandling checks for manoeuvring
Plain	No modifier	None
Full	+10 ft.	–10% to Shiphandling checks for manoeuvring
Extra	+25 ft.	–20% to Shiphandling checks for manoeuvring

Weapons

There are several sizes of cannon used on board ships. There are also swivel guns, which are smaller pieces mounted on the deck of a ship, and are used to blast smaller boats or for precise shooting. See the Weapons table for more details.

Reloading Cannons: The time it takes to reload a cannon depends on the operator's Gunnery skill.

Gunnery Skill	Combat Actions to reload (character scale)	Number of Crew Combat rounds to reload (Crew Combat scale)
<25%	25	1D6
26%-50%	20	1D4
51-75%	15	1D3
76%-100%	10	1D2
100%+	5	1

Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Crew Required	Shots/ton of Ammo	Load	Cost
9-pound (demi-culverin)	Gunnery	4D6	300 ft.	1	50	Special	2,500 reales
18-pound (culverin)	Gunnery	4D8	250 ft.	2	25	Special	5,000 reales
24-pound (demi-cannon)	Gunnery	4D12	300 ft.	2	15	Special	6,500 reales
45-pound (cannon)	Gunnery	4D20	250 ft.	3	10	Special	12,500 reales
Swivel Gun	Gunnery	3D6	150 ft.	1	50	5 rounds	1,500 reales

Buying a Ship

Large ships are rarely for sale – virtually every pirate ship was stolen, or became a pirate ship when the crew decided to go on the account. Still, especially wealthy pirates may wish to purchase a vessel, or to sell a prize. In the extremely unlikely event that a character finds a buyer or seller, the following prices should be used as guidelines:

Vessel	Cost
Rowboat	50-200 reales
Sloop	5,000-25,000 reales
Schooner	50,000-250,000 reales
Brigantine	100,000-1,00,000 reales

Customising & Changing a Ship

Ships can also be modified to serve other purposes or to emphasise a particular quality. Some modifications require the ship to be in a port or dock, or hauled up onto a beach (see Beaching a Ship, page 46).

Modifications

Some of these changes require the ship to be beached or docked, but others can be undertaken at sea, albeit with a penalty to Handiwork of –20%. Particularly difficult tasks also incur a bigger penalty to the crew's Handiwork check. Each modification also consumes a certain amount of supplies.

If the Handiwork check fails, then the modification has gone wrong – either the task is impossible, or else an accident has occurred, smashing whatever items are being used and injuring 1D6 crew.

Aft Guns

This adds a cannon to the rear of the ship, which can be fired when the vessel is being pursued.
Requires: Whatever guns are being added, 1D4 days.
Consumes: 1 ton of supplies per gun
Handiwork Modifier: Varies

The difficulty of the Handiwork check varies depending on the size of the gun, and how many aft guns the ship already has.

9-pounder	–0%
Swivel gun	–0%
18-pounder	–10%
24-pounder	–25%
45-pounder	–50%
Per gun after the first	–50%

Bulwarks

Heavy wooden bulwarks and defensive fortifications can be added to a ship's deck, to give extra protection against attack by muskets and small arms fire. Adding Bulwarks gives a –10% penalty to all Shiphandling checks. A ship with Bulwarks counts as having a +2 Hull for the purposes of protecting the crew against small arms fire.
Requires: 1D6 weeks
Consumes: 1 ton of supplies per ten feet length of the ship
Handiwork Modifier: +0%

Copper Bottom

In the warm waters of the Caribbean, a ship can quickly become fouled with teredo beetles, barnacles, weeds and other growths and parasites that slow its speed (see Careening, page 46). Adding copper plates to the underwater sections of the hull prevents the need for careering.
Requires: Drydock, 3D6 weeks
Consumes: Copper plates, costing 100 reales per ton of capacity of the ship
Handiwork Modifier: +0%

Chase Guns

Adding chase guns, on the front of the ship, works just like adding aft guns, with one important difference – the narrow prow of the ship has less space for extra armament, so the penalty to Handiwork checks is increased by +20%.

Full Repairs

Full repairs restores 2D6 Structure Points or 1D6 points of Seaworthiness per ton of supplies used.
Requires: 1 day
Consumes: Up to five tons of supplies
Handiwork Modifier: +0%

Hidden Cargo Space

This modification creates a hidden compartment in the ship's hold, where cargo can be hidden. It is often used by smugglers. Finding such a hidden space requires a Perception test opposed by the builder's Handiwork.

Requires: 1D6 days

Consumes: One ton of supplies per ton of hiding space.

Handiwork Modifier: –20% if done at sea

Lighten Hull

By removing two cannons, 10% of the ship's cargo space, or by reducing structural points by 5%, the crew make the ship lighter, reducing its draft by one foot and increasing its speed by 6ft./1 knot. This modification can be attempted multiple times, but each time, the Handiwork check penalty doubles. This modification cannot be attempted if it would reduce the ship's draft to 0.

Requires: 1D6 days

Consumes: 1D6 tones of supplies

Handiwork Modifier: –10%

More Cannons

Adding more cannons to a ship can be done, but there are two major restrictions. Firstly, heavy cannon will slow the ship down. Secondly, the extra recoil may damage the ship, or even cause it to capsize.

For every eight 9-pounders, four 18-pounders, two 24-pounders or single 45-pounder added, then reduce the ship's movement by 3 ft./ ½ knot.

If the guns mounted are larger than normal, then a second Handiwork check must be made the first time the guns are fired. If this check fails, then the gun breaks free of its housing and deals 2D6 points of Structural Damage to the ship. The ship also loses 1D4 Seaworthiness.

Requires: Extra cannons, 1D4 days
Consumes: 1 ton of supplies
Handiwork Modifier: Varies

9-pounder	–0%
18-pounder	–5%
24-pounder	–10%
45-pounder	–25%
Per gun after the first	–20%
If guns are larger than those commonly mounted on this ship	–10% per size difference

More Cargo Space

By removing internal frames and cabin space, the crew allow the ship to cram in more cargo. The ship's Structure Points are decreased by 5% to increase its capacity by an equal amount. A ship can add no more than 25% to its starting capacity.
Requires: 1 day.
Consumes: 1 ton of supplies.
Handiwork Modifier: –10%

More Sail

By adding more spars or even an extra mast, the crew attempt to increase the base speed of the vessel. The capacity of the ship is reduced by 10% or it suffers a –10% penalty to all Shiphandling checks, but its speed is increased by 6 ft./1 knot.
Requires: 1D6 days.
Consumes: 2D6 tons of supplies
Handiwork Modifier: –10%

Reinforced Hull

By fortifying the ship for combat, even a merchant vessel can be made into a warship. The ship's Hull rating is increased by 1, and its Structure Point total is increased by 20%
Requires: 3D6 weeks.
Consumes: 1 ton of supplies per five Structure Points.
Handiwork Modifier: –10%

Temporary Measures

Bail Out The Bilges

A crew can temporarily raise the Seaworthiness of a ship by 1D4 points by frantically fixing leaks and bailing out floodwaters. This must be repeated every day to keep the bonus points in place.
Requires: 8 hours
Consumes: 1D6 tons of supplies
Handiwork Modifier: –10%

Batten Down The Hatches

This prepares the ship for a storm or other dangerous weather. The ship's Seaworthiness is temporarily raised by 1D4 points. Any damage to the ship's Seaworthiness is taken from these temporary points first. While the hatches are battened down, the ship cannot fire guns.
Requires: 1 hour.
Handiwork Modifier: –10%

False Colours

By displaying false flags and hiding its extra guns and large crew, a pirate vessel can disguise itself as a merchantman.
Requires: 1 hour
Consumes: 1D6 tons of supplies
Handiwork Modifier: –10%

Partial Repairs

This repairs 1D6 Structure Points or 1 point of Seaworthiness.
Requires: 1D6 hours
Consumes: 1D6 tons of supplies
Handiwork Modifier: –10%

Repair

One thing is certain about a ship – it will always be in need of repair. Ships lose Seaworthiness as part of their normal operation, wear and tear that must be attended to eventually. In addition to this is the damage to a ship's Structure Points that occur through combat.

Cost of Repair

A ship requires 10 reales worth of materials to repair every lost point of Seaworthiness. Repairing lost Structure Points requires 100 reales worth of materials for every point.

Repair Crews

Ship repair crews work in exactly the same manner as construction crews and cost the same. A standard repair crew can repair ten points of Seaworthiness or four Structure Points per day on a beached or dry docked ship.

If he is working alone, a ship's carpenter can repair three points of Seaworthiness *or* one Structure Point per day on a beached or dry docked ship.

Repairs at Sea

While at sea, any Handiwork skill tests suffer a –40% penalty.

When attempting to repair a ship at sea, the carpenter must attempt a Handiwork skill test every twelve hours. Success indicates he has repaired one lost point of Seaworthiness *or* one Structure Point. This can be increased by an additional +1D4 points if there are sufficient crewmen available to form a work squad.

If the ship's carpenter fails his Handicraft skill test, no repairs are made but the supplies used in the attempt are still consumed.

Vessel Damage

A ship can meet its end in one of two ways. A ship that loses all its Seaworthiness points will begin taking on water at a rate faster than the water can be expelled, causing it to sink. A ship may also be destroyed through the loss of all its Structure Points as a result of damage from weather and enemies.

Seaworthiness

All ships are fashioned from timber and nails, and all of them continually take on water. The question is exactly how much water. Bailing water from a ship's bilge is a normal part of a sailor's daily duties and larger ships always carry at least one carpenter (and spare lumber) to make emergency repairs when needed.

So long as a ship has at least one Seaworthiness point remaining, the water comes into the ship at a slower rate than it is expelled by the actions of the crew. Once the ship's Seaworthiness falls to zero, its day is done. The vessel will begin to swamp, a process that takes one Crew Combat Round for every 30 feet of the ship's length. When a ship is fully swamped, it will sink.

Every time a ship suffers 10 or more points of structural damage from a single attack, reduce the Seaworthiness of the ship by one point.

Structure Points

If a ship's Structure Points are ever reduced to zero, the ship immediately begins to break apart. What remains is useful only as life rafts for the surviving crew.

Dangers

The sea is a dangerous place to be. Even without the potential dangers of enemy ships and rival pirates, threats such as storms and fires can imperil a ship.

Disease

Bad food, fetid conditions below decks and tropical heat conspire to make fever a danger on board ship. Some ports are also especially dangerous. If a disease breaks out on board ship, then the crew must make a Resilience check. If this check fails, then 1D6x5% of the crew fall ill initially. Each week, another Resilience check should be made. If this check fails, then the number infected rises by 10% and 10% of those already infected fall dead. If the check is successful, then the number infected falls by 10% and only 5% of those infected die.

If a ship has a doctor on board, then the doctor may make a Healing check. If this check is successful, then the crew gets a +20% bonus to its Resilience check.

Fire

Small fires are very common aboard ships, though they are always carefully contained. A fire that escapes control is, however, a real danger to a ship. If not extinguished, an uncontrolled fire aboard a ship will grow one size category every 2D6 minutes.

Every Combat Round during which the fire rages, the Games Master should roll damage dice and apply the damage directly to the ship's Structure Points.

Storms

The most terrible danger facing a ship at sea is the weather. The wind and the sea combine to strike at the tossing ship with a primal fury, as masts creak and crack in the gale, leaks spray water into the hold and cargo bursts its ties to tumble about the storm-wracked deck.

For a ship to survive a storm intact, the captain must employ his Shiphandling skill (or Boating skill if necessary) to keep the vessel steady and turned into the storm. If the skill test is successful, the ship endures one hour of storm weather at a cost of only one Seaworthiness. If the skill test fails, the ship endures one hour of storm weather at a cost 1D6 Seaworthiness.

Running Aground

Reefs and sandbars spell the doom for more ships than any pirate. If an unexpected reef lies ahead on the ship's course, then the lookout is permitted a Perception check to notice the reef, and then the helmsman may make a Shiphandling check to avoid it. If this fails, then the ship risks running around. Roll 1D6x(1D6–2) for the depth of the reef below the water (if the result is negative, then the reef actually pokes above the surface.) The ship takes 1D4 points of Structural damage and loses an equal amount of Seaworthiness for every foot of the ship's draft that strikes the reef. For example, if a ship with a draft of 15 feet runs into a reef that is 10 feet below the surface, then it takes 5D4 damage. If the ship is still seaworthy, then it can possibly be floated off the reef at high tide by lightening it.

Beaching a Ship

Beaching a ship is normally only done in the most dire circumstances. Canoes, rowboats and rafts can be beached with impunity, though even they have a 25% chance of losing a point of Seaworthiness when they do so.

Beaching other ships requires the crew to make a Shiphandling test with a penalty of between 0% and 100%, depending on the suitability of the beach and the time taken. If the ship is carefully sailed into shallow waters, then slowly rolled onto its side by moving the cannons and other weights, then the penalty is lessened. Sailing onto the shore in the teeth of a fierce storm incurs a much bigger penalty. Success on this test merely results in the ship losing 1D6 Seaworthiness and 1D6 Structure Points. Failure results in the ship losing its draft x D10 (minimum of 1D10) in both Seaworthiness and Structure Points, as the ship effectively crashes into the shore.

Careening

The warm waters of the Caribbean are a paradise for weeds, worms and other parasites, and a ship will quickly find itself befouled by all manner of things clinging to its lower hull. These weeds create drag, slowing a ship down considerably. A wise pirate, therefore, will careen his vessel regularly, to keep it moving swiftly and smoothly through the ocean.

Each week of sailing, roll 1D6. On a 6, then the ship's speed drops by 6 ft./1 knot until it is careened.

To careen a ship, it must be beached or put into a dock. The crew then scrape the bottom clear of debris. This takes 1D3 days and a successful Handiwork check. Each successful attempt at careening brings the ship's speed back up by 6 ft./1 knot.

Ship Sheet

Name: **Hull Score:**

Structure Points:

Seaworthiness:

Length: **Draft:**   **Skill Used:**

Movement:

Normal Crew:	Skeleton Crew (–20%):
Overcrewed (+10%)	Prize Crew (–10%):
Crew needed for guns:	Boarding Party:

Speed:

Weapons:

Fore:	Aft	Broadside	Broadside	Broadside

Ammo:

Cargo: ton

PIRACY & PLUNDER

This chapter has a great number of random tables, which the Games Master can use for random encounters and prizes. If the characters just want to sail around the Caribbean stealing ships, then you need look no further!

These random encounters should be used to fill the gaps between pre-planned episodes, or to give ideas for new adventures. Even a minor prize like a sloop could contain some surprising revelation – for example, if one of the passengers on the sloop is a Spanish official, and he knows that a galleon loaded with treasure has put into a lightly-defended harbour in Tobago. Suddenly, the pirates have a target to aim for…

Weather

At the start of a voyage, roll on the Random Weather Change table. Add +4 during the Summer:

Random Weather Change

Roll D20	Weather
<10	Calm – roll on the Random Weather table. That weather persists for one week.
11-15	Relatively Calm – roll on the Random Weather table with a +2 bonus. The weather persists for 1D6 days
16-19	Violent – roll on the Random Weather table with a +4 bonus. The weather persists for one day.
20+	Storm. The storm lasts 2D20 hours; reroll on the Random Weather Change table again then, with a –10 modifier

Random Weather

Roll D20	Weather	Shiphandling Modifier
1	No wind	No roll needed
2	No wind, very hot	No roll needed
3	No wind, stifling heat	No roll needed
4	Light Wind	No
5	Light Wind, very hot	No
6	Light Wind, stifling heat	No
7	Light Wind	No
8	Light Wind, rain	No
9	Moderate Wind	+25%
10	Moderate Wind	+25%
11	Moderate Wind, very hot	+25%
12	Moderate Wind, rain	+20%
13	Moderate Wind, torrential rain	+15%
14	Stiff Wind	+15%
15	Stiff Wind	+10%
16	Stiff Wind, rain	+10%
17	Stiff Wind, torrential rain	–0%
18	Fresh Gale, rain	–0%, 1D6 Seaworthiness
19	Fresh Gale, torrential rain	–5%, 1D6 Seaworthiness
20	Fresh Gale, torrential rain	–5%, 1D6 Seaworthiness
21	Full Gale, torrential rain	–10%, 1D6 Seaworthiness
22	Full Gale, torrential rain	–10%, 1D6 Seaworthiness
23	Hurricane	–25%, 2D6 Seaworthiness
24	Hurricane	–25%, 2D6 Seaworthiness

Each day, a crew must make a Shiphandling check, modified as per the Random Weather table. If this check is failed, then the ship loses one Seaworthiness (or more, in extreme weather).

Random Wind Direction

Roll D10	Wind Blows From
1	East
2	North-East
3	North
4	North-West
5	West
6	South-West
7	South
8-10	South-East

Daily Checklist

☠ **Mark off the provisions consumed by the crew** (each ton of provisions contains 500 man/days of food). If the crew runs out of food, they must make a Morale check each day.

☠ **Roll for weather.** If the weather is a Moderate Wind or more, then the crew must make a Shiphandling check to avoid losing one or more points of Seaworthiness.

☠ **Roll for an Encounter At Sea.**

Each month, roll to see if the vessel needs to be careened.

Encounters At Sea

The following series of tables allow the Games Master to determine randomly what sort of ships or events the characters encounter at sea. One roll should be made each day at sea. Choose the appropriate column for the ship's current location.

The possible locations are:
Near Port: Roll on this column if the ship is within a few hour's sail of a major port.
Settled Coast: Roll on this column if the ship is near an island or mainland that has been settled by one of the great powers.
Wild Coast: For unexplored, uncharted or just unsettled regions.
Open Seas: Roll on this column if the ship is at sea in an unremarkable area of the Caribbean.
Trade Route: Roll on this column if the ship is at sea along one of the major trade routes.
Backwater: Roll on this column if the ship is at sea in a little-travelled or unexplored region.

Encounters at Sea

Roll (2D6)	Near Port	Settled Coast	Wild Coast	Open Seas	Trade Route	Backwater	High Seas
2 or less	Merchant +4	Merchant +2	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant	Merchant
3	Merchant +2	Merchant	Local	Local	Merchant	Local	No encounter
4	Merchant	Local	No encounter	No encounter	Merchant	No encounter	No encounter
5	Local	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter
6	Event on ship	Event on ship	Event on ship	Event on ship	Event on ship	Event on ship	Event on ship
7	Strangeness on Shore	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter
8	Event on ship*	Event on ship*	Event on ship*	Event on ship*	Event on ship*	Event on ship*	Event on ship*
9	Local	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter	No encounter
10	Local +2	Local	No encounter	No encounter	Merchant	No encounter*	No encounter
11	Naval vessel or Pirate	Strangeness on shore	Strangeness on shore	Local	Naval Vessel or Pirate	No encounter*	No encounter*
12+	Naval vessel +2	Naval Vessel or Pirate	Random Vessel	Naval vessel or Pirate	Naval Vessel +2	Naval Vessel	Naval Vessel

* The crew must make a Morale check due to boredom or adverse events.

High Seas: Roll on this column if the ship is at sea on the open ocean between the Old World and the New.

Pirate Activity Modifiers

If word reaches port of a pirate operating in a particular area, then the authorities may take action. The Pirate Activity Modifier of a region rises by +1 each week, to the maximum listed below. The Pirate Activity Modifier is added directly onto rolls on the Encounters At Sea and Naval Vessel tables.

Captain's Reputation	Maximum Pirate Activity Modifier
10 or less	+0
11-20	+1
21-30	+2
31-40	+3
41 or more	+4

Next, roll on the appropriate table for the encounter.

If the result is an encounter with another ship, roll for that ship's nationality (Random Nationality table, page 52), crew (page 51) and plunder (pages 53-57).

Local Vessel

Roll 2D6	Encounter
2	Raft
3-4	Rowboat
5-7	Fisherman
8-9	Small trader
9-12	Sloop

Merchant Vessel

Roll 3D6	Encounter
3	Convoy – roll twice more on this table and once more on the Naval table.
4	Roll again on this table, and once on the Naval table.
5	Roll again, but the ship has suffered a misfortune. Reduce her crew by 1D10x10%.
6-9	Sloop
10-11	Schooner (50%) or Snow (50%)
12-14	Schooner (50%) or Barque (50%)
15-17	Fluyt (50%) or Brigantine (50%)
18-19	Indiaman
20-21	Convoy – roll again twice.
22	Galleon, plus roll once on the Naval table.
23>	Galleon, plus roll again twice, plus roll once on the Naval table.

Events on Board Ship

Roll 2D6	Event
2	Fire! A fire breaks out aboard ship. It is initially only a small fire, but can quickly grow if not dealt with.
3	Disease! Disease strikes down the crew. See Disease, page 45.
4	Water Spoiled! Some of the ship's water supplies have become foul and undrinkable. Roll 1D6x10% to see how much water is lost.
5	Drunkenness! Several people on the ship are drunk. The crew suffers a –10% penalty to Shiphandling checks today.
6	Gambling! A high-stakes game of cards or knucklebones is being played on ship.
7	Quarrelling! Several crew are fighting amongst themselves. The crew suffers a –10% penalty to Shiphandling checks today. Furthermore, 1D6 crew members are injured. On a natural 6, one has been killed.
8	Supplies Spoiled! Some of the ship's food supplies have become foul and undrinkable. Roll 1D6 x 5% to see how much food is lost.
9	Man Overboard! One of the crew has fallen overboard! Roll 1D6 – on a 6, it is one of the officers.
10	Good Fortune! The crew has the devil's own luck. Either raise Morale by one level, or have a free Improvement roll.
11	Dissent! The crew must make another Morale check.
12	Accident! A spar crashes to the deck, a cannon tears itself loose and slides into a wall – whatever happens, it injures 1D6 crew and deals 4D6 Structure Points of damage to the ship.

Strangeness on Shore

Roll 2D6	Event
2	Shipwreck sighted! The characters come upon a shipwreck. Roll upon the Random Vessel table to see what it was. There may still be some salvage here – roll 1D4–1 times on the vessel's Plunder table.
3	Flotsam! The characters find some wreckage from a destroyed ship. Roll on the Random Vessel table to see what it was. There may be some salvage here – roll 1D4–2 times on the vessel's Plunder table.
4	Fire! The characters see a plume of smoke from inland… it could be a cooking fire, a signal, a town put to the torch, a smouldering volcano…
5	River! The characters come upon a freshwater river.
6-8	Small village! This little village is not a true port, but the characters can trade here.
9	Fine Beach! This beach is ideal for careening a ship.
10	Sandbar! The ship may run aground on this sandbar if it is not spotted in time. See page 46.
11	Sheltered Cove! This cove is an ideal hiding place when pursued.
12	Castaway found! The characters encounter a castaway from another ship, desperate to take passage on whatever vessel will take him.

Naval or Pirate Vessel

Roll 1D6	Result
1-2	Pirate Sloop
3	Pirate Schooner
4+	Roll on the Naval Vessel table

Random Vessel

Roll 2D6	Result
2-4	Roll on Merchant Vessel table
5-9	Roll on Local Vessel table
10-11	Roll on Naval Vessel table
12	Roll on Naval or Pirate Vessel table

Naval Vessel

Roll 2D6	Encounter
2-4	Sloop
5-7	Brigantine
8-9	Corvette
10-12	Frigate
13	Roll again twice
14	Fourth-rate Warship
15 or more	Roll again three times

determine what sort of crew and plunder she carries. Roll on the Crew Size, Crew Quality and Crew Morale tables. Naval or Pirate vessels roll 1D6+6 instead of 2D6 on Crew Size rolls.

Crew Size

Crew Size 2D6	Crew Is
2	Skeleton crew for that ship
3-6	Average crew for that ship
8-10	Full crew for that ship
11-12	Overcrewed for that ship

Crew Quality

Crew Quality 2D6	Crew Quality	Base Skill	Modifier to the Morale role
2	Atrocious	15%	–2
3-5	Very Poor	25%	–1
6-7	Poor	40%	+0
8-9	Average	50%	+0
10-11	Good	60%	+1
12-13	Excellent	75%	+2
14	Fearsome	100%	+4

Naval vessels may add +2 to their roll.

Step One: Crew

Once the type of ship(s) encountered has been determined using the tables, the next step is to

Remember to add the modifiers for Morale and Crew to the crew's Base Skill!

Crew Morale

Crew 2D6	Crew Morale	Morale Bonus
3 or less	Mutinous	–10%
3-5	Low	–5%
6-7	Shaken	+0%
8-9	Average	+0%
10-11	High	+0%
12	Very High	+5%
13 or more	Fanatic	+10%

Step Two: Details

Roll on the Notable Officers table next. Assume that all other positions are filled by an officer that gives +5% to the crew's skill. Next, roll for the other ship's Nationality.

Notable Officers

Roll 1D6	Officer	Bonus to Crew
1	No notable officers	+0%
2	Captain	Shiphandling +10%, Persistence +10%
3	Quartermaster	Hand to Hand +10%, Resilience +10%
4	Gunner	Firearms +10%, Gunnery +10%
5	Boatswain	Boating +10%
6	Roll Again Twice	

Random Nationality

Roll 2D6	Result
2	Unusual/Exotic
3	French
4-5	Spanish
6-8	Same as nearest Port
9-10	English
11	Dutch
12	Portuguese

At this point, the next move is up to the characters? Do they pursue the ship? Ignore it? Attack it? Meet and parlay? If they attack, move to the Combat on the High Seas chapter on page 58.

If the characters capture a ship, roll on the Plunder tables.

A Note On Random Tables

There is an infamous story told in an old *Dragon* magazine about a space-faring game. The players showed up and spent a few hours rolling up their characters and their brand new ship. They are all excited and enthused about the idea of playing space-travelling traders and adventurers. Finally, the game kicks off. Their ship leaves the space station and jumps into hyperspace. Their navigator rolls his Hyperspace Navigation skill, and passes with ease.

However, in the system they were using, there is a tiny chance that a jump will go wrong anyway, and it does. They randomly hit an asteroid as they fly. The Games Master rolls the size of the asteroid (*a small moon*), the location hit (*main reactor*) and the result (*everyone dies*). So, by hewing too closely to the random results, the Games Master killed off all the characters at the very start of the campaign.

What's the moral of the story? It is not that random tables are bad – they are a very useful tool for simulating the vagaries of life, which works well for some styles of gaming. No, it is that the Games Master is in charge, not the tables, and he should always make the game exciting. To take a similar situation, it is possible for the characters' ship to run aground on a sandbar and sink on their very first day as pirates. If the Games Master rolls that result, then he should ask himself what would serve the game best. Perhaps he should just reroll? Or maybe the characters do lose their ship, and the game turns into a bitter struggle for survival as the characters and the other pirates find themselves on a deserted atoll. Or perhaps a merchant vessel picks the characters up as their ship sinks, and they need to pretend they are honest sailors until they can take over the merchantman and refit it as their new pirate ship.

Why Have Random Encounters At All?

It could be argued that random encounters are an anachronism in role-playing games. Instead of rolling on all these endless tables to determine the encounter,

why should the Games Master not just choose what the characters encounter? Why have a random encounter that contributes nothing to the overall story?

While a Games Master can certainly choose an encounter instead of rolling it randomly, random rolls can be fun! Players like rolling dice, and the thrill of randomly happening upon an especially rich or dangerous prize is all the greater because blind fate dictated it, instead of the Games Master choosing it.

As for random encounters not contributing to the overall story, that is not strictly true. By their very nature, role-playing games have to be 'looser' than movies or novels. With several protagonists (the Player Characters) and no central authority on events, it is difficult for a roleplaying game to have both the rising actions and reversals needed for a good story, and the character development and exploration desired by players. Random and throw-away encounters give the interactive story time to breathe.

Plunder

Piles of gold and jewels, rich silks and spices from the Orient – or just a few barrels of rotting fish and worm-ridden timber? The Plunder tables give random plunder for each type of ship. There are two tables for each vessel – the Bulk Cargo (carried in the ship's hold), and the Rare Cargo (normally kept in cabins or chests).

Master Plunder

Prize	% roll	Bulk Cargo	% roll	Rare Cargo
Raft (4 tons)	01-75	None	—	—
	76-00	1D4 Common	—	—
Rowboat (0.5 tons)	01-00	None	01-99	None
			00	1 Treasure
Fisherman (10 tons)	01-50	1 Provisions, 1 Supplies, 1D4 Common	01–95	
	51-00	1 Provisions, 1 Supplies, 2D4 common	96-00	1 Rare Supplies
Small Trader (40 tons)	01-50	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1 Ammo, 1D10 Common	01-90	1D6x100 reales
	51-75	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1 Ammo, 2D10 Common	91-99	1 Rare Supplies, 2D6x100 reales
	76-90	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1 Ammo, 1D10 Common, 1 Rich	00	50% chance of One Treasure, 4D6x1,000 reales
	91-00	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1 Ammo, 1D10 Common, 1d3 Rich		
Sloop (50 tons)	01-50	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1D4 Ammo, 2D10 Common	01-50	None
	51-75	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1D4 Ammo, 3D10 Common	51-75	1D6x200 reales
	76-90	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1D4 Ammo, 2x2D10 Common, 1D6 Rich	76-90	1 Rare Supplies, 2D6x200 reales
	91-00	1D6 Provisions, 1D6 Supplies, 1D4 Ammo, 2x2D10 Common, 1D10 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 4D6x200 reales
Schooner (100 tons)	01-50	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 2x2D10 Common	01-50	None
	51-75	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 3x2D10 Common	51-75	1D6x500 reales
	76-90	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 2x2D10 Common, 2x1D6 Rich	76-90	1D4 Rare Supplies, 4D6x500 reales
	91-00	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 3x2D10 Common, 2x1D10 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1 Treasure, 4D6x500 reales

Piracy & Plunder

Prize	% roll	Bulk Cargo	% roll	Rare Cargo
Snow (120 tons)	01-50	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 3x2D10 Common	01-50	None
	51-75	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 4xD10 Common	51-75	1D6x500 reales
	76-90	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 4x2D10 Common, 2x1D6 Rich	76-90	1D4 Rare Supplies, 4D6x500 reales
	91-00	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 4x2D10 Common, 2x1D10 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1D4 Treasure, 4D6x500 reales
Brigantine (100 tons)	01-50	3D6 Provisions, 3D6 Supplies, 2D6 Ammo, 3D10 Common	01-50	None
	51-75	3D6 Provisions, 3D6 Supplies, 2D6 Ammo, 2x2D10 Common, 1D6 Rich	51-75	1D6x500 reales
	76-90	3D6 Provisions, 3D6 Supplies, 2D6 Ammo, 2xD10 Common, 3x1D6 Rich	76-90	1D4 Rare Supplies, 4D6x500 reales
	91-00	3D6 Provisions, 3D6 Supplies, 2D6 Ammo, 3x2D10 Common, 2x1D10 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1 Treasure, 4D6x500 reales
Fluyt (250 tons)	01-50	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 3x5D10 Common, 1D10 Rich	01-50	3D6x500 reales, 50% chance of 1D6 Rare Supplies
	51-75	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo,4x5D10 Common, 3x1D10 Rich	51-75	6D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies
	76-90	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 5x5D10 Common, 4xD10 Rich	76-90	8D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 50% chance of 1D4 Treasures
	91-00	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 6x5D10 Common, 4x3D10 Rich	91-00	10D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 1D4 Treasures
Barque (80)	01-50	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 2D10 Common, 1D4 Rich	01-50	None
	51-75	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo,3D10 Common, 2D4 Rich	51-75	1D6x200 reales, 50% chance of 1 Rare Supplies
	76-90	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo,2x2D10 Common, 3D4 Rich	76-90	1 Rare Supplies, 2D6x200 reales, 50% chance of one Treasure
	91-00	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo,3x2D10 Common, 4D4 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1 Treasure, 4D6x200 reales
Indiaman (300 tons)	01-50	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 6x5D10 Common, 2D10 Rich	01-50	4D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies
	51-75	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 7x5D10 Common, 3x2D10 Rich	51-75	6D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 1 Treasure
	76-90	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 10x5D10 Common, 4x3D10 Rich	76-90	8D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 1D4 Treasures
	91-00	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 10x5D10 Common, 5x4D10 Rich	91-00	10D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 2D4 Treasures

Master Plunder (continued)

Prize	% roll	Bulk Cargo	% roll	Rare Cargo
Galleon (250)	01-50	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 4x5D10 Common, 2D10 Rich	01-50	10D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 1 Treasure
	51-75	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 6x5D10 Common, 2x2D10 Rich	51-75	12D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 1D4 Treasures
	76-90	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 6x5D10 Common, 4x4D10 Rich	76-90	16D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 2D4 Treasures
	91-00	6D6 Provisions, 6D6 Supplies, 3D6 Ammo, 6x5D10 Common, 6x4D10 Rich	91-00	20D6x500 reales, 1D6 Rare Supplies, 3D4 Treasures
Sloop of War (50 tons)	01-50	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 2D10 Common	01-50	1D6x200 reales
	51-75	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 3D10 Common	51-75	1 Rare Supplies, 2D6x200 reales
	76-90	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 3D10 Common, 1D6 Rich	76-90	1D4 Rare Supplies, 4D6x200 reales
	91-00	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 3D10 Common, 1D10 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 6D6x200 reales, 50% chance of 1 Treasure
Corvette (40 tons)	01-50	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 1D10 Common	01-50	1D6x200 reales
	51-75	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 2D10 Common	51-75	1 Rare Supplies, 2D6x200 reales
	76-90	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D6 Ammo, 1D10 Common, 1D6 Rich	76-90	1D4 Rare Supplies, 4D6x200 reales
	91-00	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 1D10 Common, 1D10 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 6D6x200 reales, 50% chance of 1 Treasure
Frigate (80 tons)	01-50	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 2D6 Ammo, 2D10 Common, 1D4 Rich	01-50	1D6x200 reales, 50% chance of 1 Rare Supplies
	51-75	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 2D6 Ammo, 2D10 Common, 2D6 Rich	51-75	1 Rare Supplies, 2D6x200 reales, 50% chance of one Treasure
	76-90	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 2D6 Ammo, 4D10 Common, 3D6 Rich	76-90	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1 Treasure, 4D6x200 reales
	91-00	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 3D10 Common, 2x2D6 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1D4 Treasure, 4D6x200 reales
Warship (100 tons)	01-50	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 4D6 Ammo, 2D10 Common, 1D4 Rich	01-50	1D6x200 reales, 50% chance of 1 Rare Supplies
	51-75	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 4D6 Ammo, 2D10 Common, 2D6 Rich	51-75	1 Rare Supplies, 2D6x200 reales, 50% chance of one Treasure
	76-90	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 4D6 Ammo, 4D10 Common, 2x3D6 Rich	76-90	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1 Treasure, 4D6x200 reales
	91-00	2D6 Provisions, 2D6 Supplies, 4D6 Ammo, 3D10 Common, 3x2D6 Rich	91-00	1D4 Rare Supplies, 1D4 Treasure, 4D6x200 reales

Plunder

Provisions: These are basic foodstuffs, such as fresh water, beer, bread, salt meat, hardtack and so forth – just what a ship's crew needs to eat. Provisions are used on a voyage, not traded.

Supplies: Rope, sails, nails, pitch, timber and other materials needed to repair a ship.

Ammo: Powder and shot for cannons.

Common Plunder: A ship carries a wide variety of goods. For each die or value listed, roll on the Common Plunder table. For example, if a ship's Plunder is listed as 2x2D10 Common, you would roll twice on the Common Plunder table. There would be 2D10 tons of the first result on board, and 2D10 tons of the second result.

Rich Plunder: Rich Plunder are goods that will fetch a very high price on the black market. Roll in the same way as Common Plunder.

Rich Plunder

D%	Item	Price	Units
1-7	Books	8,000 reales	Crate (ton)
8-20	Clothes, Fine	3,000 reales	Crate (ton)
21-30	Furniture, Fine	2,000 reales	Unit (ton)
31-40	Glassware	5,000 reales	Crate (ton)
41-60	Indigo	8000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
61-70	Pewterware	4,000 reales	Crate (ton)
71-75	Silk	50,000 reales	10 bolts (ton)
76-85	Silverware	6,000 reales	Crate (ton)
86-88	Spice, Pepper	16,000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
89-90	Spice, Cloves	30,000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
91-92	Spice, Rosemary	8,000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
93	Spice, Ginseng	60,000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
94	Spice, Ginger	10,000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
95-00	Wine, Fine	4,000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)

Common Plunder

Roll %	Item	Price	Units
01-02	Ale	600 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
03-04	Brandy	400 reales	Six Barrel (ton)
05-07	Building Materials	120 reales	Six Bales (ton)
08-09	Broadcloth	500 reales	Six Bales (ton)
10-11	Cannons	500 reales	Cannon (ton)
12-15	Cattle	80 reales	Three Cattle (ton)
16-17	Clothing	800 reales	Ton
18-19	Cocoa	1,000 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
20-22	Coffee	700 reales	Twelve Cask (ton)
23-25	Cotton	300 reales	Six Bales (ton)
26-27	Copper	1,000 reales	Ton
28-30	Flour	200 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
31-33	Fruit	300 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
34-35	Furniture	500 reales	Piece (ton)
36-40	Grain	90 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
41-42	Gunpowder	1,200 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
43-45	Hardwood	120 reales	Ton
46-47	Horses	400 reales	1 Horse (ton)
48-51	Logwood	80 reales	Ton
52-53	Iron	500 reales	Ton
54-57	Meat	100 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
58-59	Molasses	250 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
60-61	Oil	500 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
62-65	Pitch	400 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
66-68	Rice	150 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
69-70	Rum	2,500 reales	Twelve Casks (ton)
71-74	Salt Beef	200 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
75-77	Salt	150 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
78-80	Slaves	1,500 reales	Two Men (ton)
81-84	Sugar	1,000 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
85-88	Supplies	200 reales	Ton
89-90	Tobacco	1,000 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
91-93	Vinegar	200 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
94-98	Wine, Cheap	400 reales	Six Barrels (ton)
99-00	Wool	500 reales	Six Bales (ton)

Rich Supplies: Rich Supplies are especially valuable items found on some ships.

Treasure: Treasure is the real prize to be found on board a ship – coins, jewels, gold bars and other fabulously valuable items.

Rich Supplies

D%	Item	Price
01-05	Ship's Anchor	800 reales
06-10	Navigator's Instruments	650 reales
11-15	Shipwright's Tools	250 reales
16-20	Surgeon's Kit	600 reales
21-25	Compass	150 reales
26-30	Pocketwatch	25 reales
31-40	Telescope	1,500 reales
41-50	Fine clothes	120 reales
51-55	Very fine clothes	1,200 reales
56-60	Magnificent clothes	1,500 reales
61-65	Rifle	1000 reales
66-70	Exquisite Rapier (+10% to hit)	500 reales
71-75	Very Fine Hat	500 reales
76-80	Fine Charts (+5% to Navigation in this region)	Varies
81-90	Important Passenger	Ransom?
91-92	Especially talented Gunner (skill 40+4D10%)	
93-94	Especially talented Boatswain (skill 40+4D10%)	
95-96	Especially talented Carpenter (skill 40+4D10%)	
97-98	Especially talented Doctor (skill 40+4D10%)	
99-00	Secret Documents	Varies

Treasure

Roll d%	Item	Price
01-10	2D6 x 1000 Silver Coins	1 reale each
11-15	2D6 x 100 Gold Coins	32 reales each
16-20	6D6 x 1000 Silver Coins	1 reale each
21-25	6D6 x 100 Gold Coins	32 reales each
26-30	12D6 x 1000 Silver Coins	1 reale each
31-40	12D6 x 100 Gold Coins	32 reales each
41-45	10D6 Silver Ingots	320 reales per bar
45-50	Cask of Nutmeg	5,000 reales
51-55	Jewelled Ring	10,000 reales
56-60	Jewelled Broach	20,000 reales
61-65	Jewelled Crucifix	50,000 reales
66-70	1D4 Gold Plates	20,000 reales each
71-75	Bag of Pearls	500 reales each
76-80	Bag of 3D6 Emeralds	1,500 reales each
81-85	3D6 Gold Ingots	10,000 reales per bar
86-90	Bag of 3D6 Rubies	2,500 reales each
91	Cask of Gemstones	150,000 reales
92	Ivory Tusks	125,000 reales
93	Jesuit's Bark	160,000 reales
94	Crate of Jewellery	160,000 reales
95	Golden Aztec Artefacts	200,000 reales
96-00	Roll Again Twice	

Of course, once the plunder is in a pirate's grasp, he still has to trade it or sell it for willing wenches, pipes of wine and other necessities, like parrots. See Selling Off Your Ill-Gotten Gains,

Piracy & Plunder

COMBAT ON THE HIGH SEAS

This chapter covers maiming, brutality, sword-fights, boarding actions, ship-to-ship battles and exactly what happens when a cannon explodes in your face.

The standard *RuneQuest* rules serve admirably for most fights in a pirate game. For bloody struggles between a band of pirates and an unfortunate crew, or a running skirmish between escaped prisoners and the Naval officers trying to recapture them, the rules are used without modification. There are two situations, however, where more detailed rules are needed for personal combat. These are Duels and Crew Combat.

A Duel is a fight between a small number of characters (usually only two) which the Games Master wishes to lavish more detail on than the average fight. A Duel might be a literal duel with rapiers, a fistfight, or a desperate battle on a sinking ship.

By contrast, a Crew Combat is a boarding action, a mutiny, or a battle on land involving a dozen or more fighters on either side, where the normal rules for combat would take too long.

Duels

A Duel works just like a normal *RuneQuest* melee combat, with the added complexity of Advantage. Advantage is a measure of how much one combatant is controlling the movement and tempo of the fight. Only one character in a fight can hold the Advantage at any given moment – that character is said to be Favoured in the fight. If the opponent does something to gain Advantage, then subtract the Advantage gained from the Favoured character's total. If this would reduce the Favoured character's Advantage to a negative number, then the opponent becomes Favoured instead, with a positive Advantage total equal to the excess gain.

For example, the pirates Bartholomew and Morgan are fighting a duel. Bartholomew made several successful attacks, and now has an Advantage of +3. As Bartholomew has the advantage, he is the Favoured combatant. Morgan executes a particularly clever riposte that garners him 6 points of Advantage. He subtracts this from Bartholomew's total, bringing it down to 0. The remaining three points go into a new Advantage for Matthew.

Optional Rule: Fighting Aboard Ship

On a small vessel like a sloop, there is hardly enough room to take two paces without having to step over a coiled rope, hatchway, chest or other obstacle. There is little space to swing a sword in a fight. Therefore, most weapons suffer a penalty of –10% to hit in cramped conditions such as the deck of a ship.

A character who does not care about slicing through lines can ignore this penalty, but if he fails an attack roll by more than 20%, then his weapon has gotten caught on some obstacle and he is disarmed.

Weapons such as axes, cutlasses and daggers are therefore better than rapiers or polearms on board ship. Weapons suitable for use in cramped conditions are listed on page 21.

Some conditions, such as the lower decks of a ship or a cave, are so cramped that anything larger than a knife suffers a penalty.

The easiest way to keep track of Advantage is by putting a ten-sided die between the combatants. Move it closer to whatever character is currently favoured. When the Favoured character gains more Advantage, he increases the number shown on the die; when the opponent gains Advantage, he decreases the number on the die, or moves it over to his side if he becomes Favoured.

Gaining Advantage

There are several ways to increase or decrease an Advantage score:

☠ **Opposed Rolls:** A character gains one point of Advantage whenever he beats an opponent's score by more than 20% in an opposed roll. In melee combat, where attack rolls are opposed by Parry or Dodge, then advantage will flow back and forth quickly.

☠ **Successful Hits:** Instead of dealing damage on a successful hit, a character can instead choose to gain 1D6 points of Advantage.

☠ **Hero Points:** A character may spend a Hero Point to gain 1D6 points of Advantage.

Using Advantage

There are several distinct advantages, so to speak, to having the Advantage in a fight. There are two 'passive' bonuses that apply all the time, as long as a character is favoured:

☠ **Bonus to Attack rolls:** A character gains a +10% bonus to all his attacks for every 5 points of Advantage he holds, or portion thereof. So, a

Witty Repartee

Optionally, in Cinematic games, a character in a Duel can gain Advantage through witty repartee. Once per round, a character may insult or bait his opponent. If the opponent cannot respond wittily to this opening gambit, then the character gains +1 Advantage. If the opponent does respond, then the opponent gains +1 Advantage unless the character also responds in kind. The characters keep trading insults until either one character cannot respond wittily.

The Games Master (in a duel between two Player Characters) or the other players (in a duel between a Player Character and a Non-Player Characters) are the audience, and should laugh or groan appropriately. If a line elicits no response, then it has failed.

Optionally, a player can make an Influence check to get a suggestion from the other players, if he is stuck and cannot come up with a good line.

character with even a single point of Advantage gets a +10% bonus; a character with +11 Advantage gets a massive +30% bonus to hit.

☠ **Bonus to Parries:** A character gains a +5% bonus to all his parries for every 5 points of Advantage he holds, or portion thereof. So, a character with even a single point of Advantage gets a +5% bonus; a character with +11 Advantage gets a +15% bonus to parry.

Advantage can also be spent as part of an attack in several ways.

☠ **Force Movement:** If a character is in melee with a foe, he can force his foe to move by spending Advantage. The character spends one point of Advantage per metre he wishes to move, and both foes must move back or forth as the character chooses. If the opponent does not wish to move, then the character gets a Reaction free attack, and the opponent's Dodge score is penalised by 50%. Using this move, a character can force an opponent back over a cliff, into a cramped area, or into a burning building.

☠ **Bonus Damage:** A character can increase damage from a successful hit by spending Advantage. Each point of Advantage spent increases damage by +1. The Advantage must be spent after the attack is deemed to be successful, but before the damage dice are rolled.

Resetting Advantage

There are several ways a character who is losing a fight can 'reset' the Advantage back to 0, so that no character is favoured.

☠ **Breaking Off:** If neither combatant in a fight makes an attack roll in a round, then the Advantage resets to 0.

☠ **Changing The Nature Of The Fight:** A switch from melee to grappling, or from armed melee to unarmed melee resets the Advantage to 0.

☠ **Blinding, distracting or otherwise stunning the opponent:** Such an event resets the Advantage to 0.

Optional Rule: Fatigue in Pirates Games

The *RuneQuest* rules for Fatigue rarely come into play, because normal combat is only Medium activity, so characters can keep fighting for a number of *minutes* equal to their CON without risking becoming Fatigued. While this rule supports the dungeon crawling or heroic questing of fantasy adventurers, it does not reflect the more mortal characters of *Pirate* campaigns.

It is suggested, then, that the following rules changes are made in *Pirates* games to fatigue:

☠ All combat counts as Heavy Activity. Therefore, a character can only fight for a number of rounds equal to his CON score before risking Fatigue.

☠ Characters recover from fatigue slightly faster, as the following table shows:

Current State	To recover up to the next state takes…	
	Full Rest	**Light Activity**
Fresh	—	—
Winded	1 round	1 minute
Wearied	5 minutes	1 hour
Exhausted	4 hours	—
Debilitated	8 hours	—

Even if the change in the Fatigue rating of combat is not made for normal fights, it is strongly recommended that Duels count as Heavy activity.

Reversing Advantage

If the character who is *not* favoured gets a critical result in an opposed roll, and the favoured character fails, then the Advantage is immediately reversed, and the unfavoured character becomes favoured.

Duels With Multiple Participants

While the Duel rules are intended to be used to model fights where two characters vie for victory, they can be extended to larger fights. If there are multiple combatants on each side, say a two against two or three versus three battle, then the rules are used as normal, except that the passive bonuses to Parries and Attacks are not used.

Formal Duels

Formal duels are a gentleman's way of settling disputes and matters of honour that cannot be addressed in any fashion save bloodshed. In a duel, the challenged party is permitted the pick of weapons – pistols or swords are normally chosen. Duels take place at a time agreed upon by both parties, although they never take place on the same night as the offence that provoked the quarrel.

Each participant nominates a second, who watches for cheating. In a pistol duel, the seconds load the weapons; a second will also fight the duel if the challenger or challenged is incapacitated or sick.

Duels normally go on until First Blood, which occurs when a location takes 3 or more points of damage. When a participant is wounded, then he should yield and give himself up to the mercy of the victor.

Pirate Duels

Duels between pirates are never so formal, unless the participants are gentlemen of honour who have somehow fallen into piracy. Pirate duels almost never

Duel Summary

- ☠ Only one side can have advantage at any time

- ☠ Whenever you win a roll, you either gain +1 Advantage, or take –1 Advantage away from your opponent

- ☠ Whoever has Advantage gains a bonus to attacks and parries

- ☠ Advantage can also be spent to increase damage and perform other special attacks

- ☠ Advantage is reversed if the currently disadvantaged party gets a critical success

- ☠ Advantage can be reset to 0 by pausing or changing the nature of a fight

take place on board a ship – the brotherhood should be united when at sea, so disputes should be settled on the shore. Unlike a formal duel, pirate duels tend to be to the death. Instead of a second, there is normally a ring of cheering and jeering pirates, out for the sight of blood. Some duels even involve the participants being bound together, or blindfolded, or take place on sandbars of sucking mud or on bare rocks with the tide rising swiftly.

Pistol Duels

In a pistol duel, both participants start back to back. They then take a predetermined number of steps apart, then turn and fire. The characters roll their Strike Rank when they have taken the requisite number of steps. A character can cheat, turning and firing early. In such cases, the cheater gets a +1D6 bonus to his Strike Rank.

When firing, both characters get a +25% bonus to their Pistols skill, due to the formal conditions and predictability of the opponent's location.

Crew Combat

Crew Combat is a more abstract combat system, used when there are lots of combatants on either side, too many to bother keeping track of individually. The size of units in Crew Combat varies, and should be set to a convenient value. For example, in a sea battle between two crews of 200 men, then splitting each crew into four fifty-man groups would make sense. In a boarding action, when the pirates send a few twenty-man boats across the water, then each boat might be a unit.

Crew Combat works in a similar way to normal combat, with the following changes:

- ☠ Crew Combat Rounds are thirty seconds long.

- ☠ There are no Strike Ranks. The attacking force goes first, followed by the defenders. If there is no clear attacking force, then both sides roll 1D10, highest goes first, re-rolling ties.

- ☠ To make a Crew Combat attack, the leader of the crew (normally, the quartermaster or the gunner) makes a check against the appropriate skill (Firearms or Hand-To-Hand). This check may be modified by conditions (see below). Hand to hand checks are opposed.

- ☠ Crew damage is not measured in hit points lost – instead, a unit may be Fresh, Wounded, Seriously Wounded, Mauled or Slaughtered.

- ☠ At the end of a Crew Combat Round, one or both crews must make Morale checks.

- ☠ Characters can make Heroic Actions during Crew Combat, which inspire their companions and give bonuses to the result.

Crew Health, Crew Damage & Individual Characters

A crew's health is measured in levels. The levels are Fresh (unhurt), Wounded, Seriously Wounded, Mauled and Slaughtered. When a crew suffers an attack, it might drop down one or more health levels. Alternatively, it may also suffer a bonus to the next damage roll made against it – this models some of

not been injured at all, and an unlucky fellow or two who are dead or maimed.

Crew Is…	Individual Damage
Fresh	No damage
Wounded	Minor damage to random location
Seriously Wounded	Minor wound to random location
Maimed	Serious wound to random location
Slaughtered	Major wound to random location
Dead	Dead

Ranged Attacks

Ranged Attack: To make a ranged attack on another crew, the crew makes a Firearms check, as modified by the Crew Combat Modifiers listed in the sidebar.

A critical success gives a +6 bonus to the damage roll.

Ranged Damage: Roll 2D6 and compare to the Ranged Damage table.

the crew being injured, but not so many that the crew as a whole is affected. For example, if the result on a damage roll is '+3 to next damage roll', then the next time in the battle that the crew is injured, then 3 is added to the roll.

Running Wounds Totals vanish when a crew actually takes damage.

If a Slaughtered crew takes further damage, then it is removed from the battle (but most crews will break long before taking such punishment).

At the *end* of a battle, the actual damage on the crew is determined. A crew that has been Slaughtered may in fact have lost only a few sailors, or it could have been killed almost to a man. It is hard to tell, in the press and chaos of battle, who has been killed and who has merely been horribly maimed. See Aftermath, below.

For individual characters in a battle, then the table below shows roughly what the various crew health levels translate to. However, this is only an average result – in a unit that just got reduced from Fresh to Wounded, there would be plenty of pirates who have

Ranged Combat Modifiers

Good equipment	+5%
Excellent equipment	+10%
Good attacking position	+10%
Surprise	+40%
Crew is Wounded	−10%
Crew is Seriously Wounded	−20%
Crew is Mauled	−30%
Crew is Slaughtered	−50%
Strong Wind	−10%
High Wind	−20%
Fierce Wind	−40%
Target obscured by mist or smoke	−10%
Target obscured by thick smoke or fog	−20%
Attacker on unstable ground (including a ship)	−20%
Target has moved 100 feet or more since the last round	−10%

Note that modifiers for target size are *not* used.

Ranged Damage

Roll	Successful Firearms Check	Failed Firearms Check
1 or less	+1 to next roll	No damage
2	+1 to next roll	No damage
3	+1 to next roll	No damage
4	+2 to next roll	No damage
5	+2 to next roll	No damage
6	+3 to next roll	+1 to next roll
7	+3 to next roll	+1 to next roll
8	1 damage level	+2 to next roll
9	1 damage level	+2 to next roll
10	2 damage levels	+3 to next roll
11	2 damage levels	+3 to next roll
12	3 damage levels	1 damage level
13+	3 damage levels	2 damage levels

A Crew must make a Morale check whenever it takes a damage level – see Morale checks, below.

For example, a band of twenty pirates ambush a column of forty guards and mine workers at a gold mine on the Spanish coast. The pirates are an Average crew, giving them a base Firearms score of 50%. They are lead by an experienced gunner and have good morale, increasing their score to 60% (see Crews & Sworn Companions for more details).

The pirates ambush the enemy, giving them a +40% bonus to their attack, and fire from a rise overlooking a trail through the jungle, giving them an extra +10%. Unsurprisingly, they hit with their opening barrage.

They are outnumbered by the enemy, so they suffer a –1 penalty to their damage roll. The pirates roll an 11, –1 for a result of 10. This is a result of two damage levels, bringing the enemy down from Fresh to Seriously Wounded. The Spanish also have to make a Morale check (see below).

The pirates fire again next round, as the Spanish struggle up the slope towards them. The pirates have lost the bonus for surprise, reducing their Firearms chance to hit to

only 70% (60%, +10% for their good position). The firearms check fails, so the pirates roll on the Failed column of the damage table. They roll a 7, modified down by the fact they're outnumbered to a 6. The result is that the next time the Spanish suffer damage, the roll on the damage table will be increased by +1.

Of course, the pirates will not get a chance to fire again, as the Spanish are upon them and it is time to draw cutlasses!

Hand to Hand Attacks

Unlike Ranged Attacks, Hand to Hand attacks are opposed checks – both groups of combatants make a Hand to Hand check, and the damage depends on which side won the check. If both succeed, then whoever rolled the highest or got a critical wins. If both fail, then whoever rolled the lowest wins.

Severely Outnumbered Attackers & Ranged Attacks

No matter how good your crew's shooting is, the amount of lead shot they can put into the air is limited by the number of guns they have. Therefore, in cases where a small handful of men are firing at a much larger group, a modifier is applied to their Ranged *damage* rolls.

Twice as many defenders as attackers: –1 to damage
Three times: –2 to damage
Four times: –3 to damage, and so forth.

So, if you are outnumbered five to one, you suffer a –4 penalty to your ranged attack damage rolls.

Cover & Fortifications

Cover also reduces the damage from Ranged attacks.

Thick Vegetation: –1 damage
Light Cover (low walls, ship railings): –2 damage
Medium Cover (wooden buildings): –3 damage
Heavy Cover (stone fort): –4 damage

Hand to Hand attacks are modified as follows:

Hand to Hand Combat Modifiers

Attackers outnumber defenders	+10%
Attackers considerably outnumber defenders	+20%
Attackers vastly outnumber	+40%
Good equipment	+5%
Excellent equipment	+10%
Defensive position	+10% to +50%, depending on conditions
Surprise	+40%
Crew is Wounded	–10%
Crew is Seriously Wounded	–20%
Crew is Mauled	–30%
Crew is Slaughtered	–50%

A critical success gives a +6 bonus to the damage roll.

Hand to Hand: Roll 2D6 and add the crew's average Damage Modifier to the roll, then compare to the Hand to Hand Damage table. Separate rolls are made for both sides.

Hand to Hand Damage

Roll	Loser of Opposed Check	Winner of Opposed Check
1 or less	+1 Running Wounds Total	No damage
2	+1 Running Wounds Total	No damage
3	+1 Running Wounds Total	No damage
4	+2 Running Wounds Total	No damage
5	+2 Running Wounds Total	No damage
6	+3 Running Wounds Total	+1 Running Wounds Total
7	+3 Running Wounds Total	+1 Running Wounds Total
8	1 damage level	+2 Running Wounds Total
9	1 damage level	+2 Running Wounds Total
10	2 damage levels	+3 Running Wounds Total
11	2 damage levels	+3 Running Wounds Total
12	3 damage levels	1 damage level
13+	3 damage levels	2 damage levels

To continue the example of the pirate ambush, the Severely Wounded Spanish reach the pirate ambushers on the hill. The Pirates have a Hand to Hand score of 55%; the Spanish have a score of 40%.

The pirates have no applicable modifiers to their Hand to Hand score.

The Spanish have several modifiers, though – they are Seriously Wounded (–20%) and they outnumber their foe (+10%), giving them a final score of 30%.

An opposed roll is made – the Pirates roll a 19, and the Spanish roll a 98. The pirates have won the roll.

Now, onto damage. Damage rolls are made for both sides. For the damage suffered by the pirates, the roll is a 7, +1 damage to the next roll, so nothing too serious.

For the Spanish, the roll is a 7 – BUT there is a still a +1 Running Wounds Total hanging over the Spanish from the last round of shooting. This increases the damage roll to an 8, for one level of damage. The Seriously Wounded Spanish are reduced to Mauled. This fight will soon be over…

Morale Checks

A morale check must be made whenever:

☠ A crew is reduced by one damage level.

☠ A crew loses a Hand to Hand combat with a foe that considerably outnumbers them.

☠ Something happens to demoralise the crew, such as their ship exploding or their captain dying before their eyes (assuming they like their captain).

☠ In sea battles, Morale checks can also be triggered by raising a pirate flag, or by vapouring.

A Morale check is made using the crew's Persistence score. If this check is failed, then the crew's nerve has faltered, and they lose one level of Morale. On a critical success, the crew is galvanised by the challenge, and gains one level of Morale.

If a Crew in battle is reduced to Low morale, then they must make a Morale check *every round*, as their nerve slips. A Mutinous crew surrenders or flees, depending on circumstances.

Aftermath

When a Crew Combat is finished, it is time to count the casualties and bury the dead. The crew must make a Resilience check to determine how severe the damage was, then consult the Aftermath table. Any outstanding Running Wounds Totals are directly translated into dead crew.

Aftermath

Crew Was…	Successful Resilience Check	Failed Resilience Check
Fresh	No lasting damage	1D3 crew killed, 10% injured
Wounded	1D6 crew killed, 10% injured	2D6 crew killed, 20% injured
Seriously Wounded	3D6 crew killed, 20% injured	4D6 crew killed, 30% injured
Mauled	4D6 crew killed, 30% injured	6D6 crew killed, 50% injured
Slaughtered	6D6 crew killed, 50% injured	2D6 survivors, all injured

To finish our example of the pirate ambush – the Spanish broke after the short hand-to-hand engagement, falling back down the slope leading to the chests of gold dust lying on the track. The pirates are victorious – but at what cost? The pirates were never reduced below Fresh, but they must still make a Resilience check.

The pirates fail their check, so they suffer 1D6 casualties, +1 for the +1 Running Wounds Total still hanging over them. Five pirates have died, and 10% of their number – another 2 – have been injured.

Meanwhile, back in the Spanish fort, the enemy count their dead. The Spanish were reduced to Mauled, but they pass their Resilience check. Of the 40 Spanish, 4D6 are dead, and another 30% (13) are wounded.

Heroic Actions

In a battle, player characters may get a chance to perform Heroic Actions, which are great deeds that inspire the crew. Heroic Actions can give a bonus to the Crew. Remember, Crew Combat rounds take thirty seconds, while normal character-scale rounds only take five seconds, so there are six character-scale rounds per Crew Combat round.

Sample Heroic Actions, and their effects on the battle as a whole, are listed below:

Heroic Actions

Action	Bonus to Crew
Inspiring the crew through conspicuous bravery	Re-roll a failed Morale check
Duelling the opponent's leader	+5% Hand to Hand
Leading a few crack gunners to catch the foe in a crossfire	+5% Firearms
Saving a wounded crewmate	–2 to the next damage roll made against your crew
Throwing yourself into the fight	+2 to the next damage roll made against the enemy

Crew Combat Summary

☠ Instead of hit points, crews have abstract health levels and a Running Wound Total. The Running Wound total adds to damage rolls, and resets to zero whenever a crew loses a health level.

☠ Attacks on crews either reduce health, or add to a Crew's Running Wound Total

☠ Crews must also make Morale checks whenever they take damage.

☠ At the end of the battle, an Aftermath roll is made to see how many crew were actually slain and how many were merely injured.

Special Crew Combats

These situations crop up often enough in pirate games to justify their own special rules.

Cannons

A cannon loaded with standard or chain shot will automatically kill 1D6 Crew on a successful gunnery check, and increases the enemy crew's Running Wounds Total by 1.

A cannon loaded with grape shot deals damage like a normal Firearms attack to a crew. Cannons are always 'outnumbered' by a crew, so they suffer a penalty to their damage rolls against crews, as follows:

Swivel Gun/9 pounder: –4
18 pounder: –3
24 pounder: –2
45 pounder: –0

Boarding Actions

When storming another ship, follow these steps:

Step One: Approach

If the Crew is attacking from their ship, then it must be brought alongside the enemy ship (which requires a successful opposed Shiphandling roll).

If attacking from boats, then they must make a successful Boating check to grapple with the enemy ship.

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In both situations, the attackers will be vulnerable to fire from the target. The Approach takes at least one round, perhaps more.

Step Two: Boarding

Next round, the Crew must make a Boarding check. This is a Hand to Hand check against whatever crew are on deck, but the attacking Crew suffers a base –50% penalty to their attack roll. They get a +20% bonus to their attack roll if they have Boarding Axes or Boarding Pikes, or if their ship is alongside the enemy vessel.

If the attacking Crew fails to do any damage to the enemy crew, then they have been driven back, and may try another Boarding check next round. If they do at least one level of damage to the enemy crew, then they have won a foothold on the foe's deck, and no further boarding actions need be made.

Note that if the crew boarded from their ship, and not from boats, then the enemy crew can counter-attack without having to make their own Boarding check.

Example: The crew of the Greymantle *are trying to board a fishing boat off Newfoundland. They try to board from their little ship, so they make a Shiphandling check to come alongside. If the fishermen had guns, then the pirates would be fired on as they closed, but the fishing boat has no cannons or muskets.*

The pirates come alongside, and make a Boarding check. They have a Hand to Hand score of 45%, and the fishermen have a score of only 30%. However, the pirates suffer a –30% penalty as they try to force their way on board, so the actual Hand to Hand check is 15% vs. 30%. The pirates, by a quirk of fate, actually win. They roll a 7 for damage, which does not inflict a damage level on the fishermen, so the boarding action has actually failed. They can try again next round, though, and will have a +3 Running Wounds Total. They will likely fight their way onto the fishing boat's deck eventually, but it will be costly.

Sieges

Besieging a fort or walled town is difficult. Cannons can be used to blast through fortifications, or walls can be stormed by ladders. Especially patient pirates could just blockade a port, stopping food and supplies from reaching the town.

Structure	Armour	Structure Points
Low Wall	–2	100
Fortified House or Prison	–3	150
Tower	–4	300
Fortress Wall	–4	500
Keep	–5	1,000

Ship to Ship Combat

Clashes between ships at sea are resolved as follows:

- ☠ The two ships either engage each other in battle, or one attempts to flee.

- ☠ If one tries to flee, the other can give chase.

- ☠ If they engage, or if the fleeing vessel is caught, then the two battle.

- ☠ In a battle, both ships move, then exchange fire.

- ☠ Sailors from one ship can attempt to board the other.

- ☠ Battle continues until one ship surrenders, is captured, sunk, explodes or otherwise defeated.

Battle Stations!

In a battle, some of the pirate crew man the guns, others attend to the lines and the business of sailing the ship, and others use their muskets to fire at the enemy crew until they come close enough to board. Civilian ships operate with a much smaller crew, and often have only enough men to sail and man a handful of guns. Warships, like pirate vessels, carry far more sailors than average.

Before battle, a captain should allocate some of his crew to these three stations:

Sailing Crew: See the description of each ship for the number of sailors needed to crew a ship. Optionally, a ship can have less than the minimum recommended crew – see page 35 for details on skeleton and prize crews.

Gunnery Crew: See the description of each cannon for the number of sailors needed to operate it. Cannons can be undermanned, but this increases the amount of time it takes to reload the weapon. A minimum of one man per cannon is required.

Boarding Crew: The rest of the crew fires muskets from the deck when in range, or engages in boarding actions. This crew can also vapour to intimidate the enemy.

Damage to these three crews should be tracked separately on the crew sheet.

Sighting Ships

Spotting an enemy vessel requires a successful Perception check, modified as follows. A look-out in a crow's nest can see about 8-10 miles.

Condition	Perception Modifier
Target is	
A rowboat or other boat	–50%
A small vessel	–25%
An average vessel	–10%
A large vessel	+0%
A very large vessel	+10%
An island	+25%
Coastline	+50%
Lit up at night	+40%
Weather conditions	Up to –100%

A spyglass gives a +20% bonus to Perception checks.

Pirate Flags: When sighted by the enemy, the pirate captain can choose to raise his pirate flag. If this is done, then the enemy crew must immediately make a Morale check, penalised by the captain's Reputation:

Reputation	Modifier to Morale
1–2	—
3–5	–5%
6–10	–10%
11–15	–15%
16–20	–20%
21–25	–20%
26–30	–25%
31–40	–35%
41–50	–40%

Remember, if a crew's Morale is reduced to Mutinous, then they will likely surrender or flee. Pirates can also use Vapouring (see below) to further attack an enemy crew's Morale.

No Quarter: A captain can also choose to raise the red flag of slaughter, declaring that he will offer no mercy to the enemy crew. If this is done, then the enemy crew must make a Morale check immediately, but it also means they will not surrender, but will fight to the last (or mutiny against their commander and try to join the pirates).

Chases

In a chase, both ships make opposed Shiphandling checks. The winner may increase the relative movement of their ship by 1D6x6 feet this Crew Combat Round.

When being chased, the pursuing ship can fire its chase guns, and the pursued ship can return fire with aft guns. See Firing, below.

Manoeuvring

If ships are closing for battle, then they can manoeuvre for better position. There are several manoeuvres that can be attempted – if miniatures or other representations are being used, then questions about line of sight and firing arcs can be resolved there. Alternatively, manoeuvres can be kept abstract, with just the relative positions of the two ships being considered.

A ship running fighting sail or below may turn up to 90 degrees in a single Crew Combat round. A ship running plain sail or higher may only turn 45 degrees in a single Crew Combat round.

If the ship's Helmsman is a Player Character, then he may use his own Shiphandling skill instead of the crew's skill for these checks.

Only one of the following Manoeuvres may be attempted in a particular round.

Hard Turn!: With a successful Shiphandling check, a ship may turn an extra 45 degrees this round.

Steady!: The helmsman endeavours to hold the ship steady, to provide a stable platform for firing. If the Shiphandling check is successful, then any Gunnery checks made by the crew this round gain a +10% bonus.

Evasive Action: By steering erratically or keeping out of the arc of fire of the enemy ship, the helmsman tries to protect his vessel. If the Shiphandling check is successful, then any Gunnery attacks on the ship suffer a –10% penalty.

Close For Boarding: The helmsman attempts to bring his vessel close enough to the enemy ship for boarding. Opposed Shiphandling checks must be made; if the character wins, then the crew may attempt to board the enemy ship (see Boarding Actions, page 67).

Firing

As a ship is pitching up and down in the midst of battle, it counts as Unstable Ground, inflicting a –20% penalty to all ranged attack rolls. The Steady manoeuvre mitigates this penalty somewhat. Especially rough conditions can increase this penalty.

Muskets & Small Arms: These attacks take place as normal for Crew Combat. If there are multiple Crews on the enemy vessel (a boarding party and sailors, for instance), then choose randomly which crew takes the damage. The hull value of the ship is applied as a modifier to the damage roll.

Swivel Guns: Each swivel gun fires independently. A swivel gun can be loaded with round shot, in which case it deals its listed damage (3D6 damage; see page 41), or grape shot (standard firearms damage to crew with a –4 penalty).

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Cannon: Cannons can be fired in four different ways:

- ☠ **Single Firing with Round Shot**

- ☠ **Single Firing with Grape Shot**

- ☠ **Single Firing with Chain Shot**

- ☠ **Broadside**

Single Firing: Single firing a cannon uses the formal Ranged Attack rules, not the Crew Combat rules. If a character is single firing the cannon, then he may use his own Gunnery score instead of that of the crew.

If round shot is used, then the attack deals normal damage for a cannon of that type (see page 41 for cannon damage tables).

If grape shot is used, then the attack deals damage to the crew of the enemy ship (see page 67 for cannon attacks on crew).

If chain shot is used, then the attack must use a Precise Attack (–40%) to accurately aim at the enemy mast. If this attack is successful, then a critical hit is automatically scored on the enemy mast. See Cannon Critical Hits, see page 72.

Broadside: A broadside consists of several cannon firing simultaneously. All the cannons fired must be of the same time and loaded with the same shot. While each shot is less accurate than a single shot attack, filling the air with that much lead does aid immensely. A broadside attack, therefore, has a +20% bonus to the Gunnery check, often counter-acting the penalty from the ship's movement.

To be fully effective, a broadside should have at least eight cannon firing simultaneously. For every cannon less than eight, subtract one when rolling for how many shots actually hit, to a maximum of –4. A broadside cannot be fired with fewer than four cannon. Larger broadsides gain a +1 to this roll per extra cannon, to a maximum of twelve.

Roll 2D6 on the Broadsides table to determine how many shots actually hit.

If the Gunnery check is a critical, then the broadside scores 1 critical on the enemy ship.

Broadsides

Roll	Successful Gunnery Check	Failed Gunnery Check
1 or less	1 hit	No hits
2	1 hit	No hits
3	1 hit	No hits
4	2 hits	No hits
5	2 hits	No hits
6	2 hits	1 hit
7	3 hits	1 hit
8	3 hits	1 hit
9	3 hits	2 hits
10	4 hits	2 hits
11	4 hits	2 hits
12	5 hits	3 hits
13	5 hits	3 hits
14	6 hits	3 hits
15	7 hits	3 hits
16	8 hits	4 hits

Roll the appropriate damage for each hit, remembering to subtract the ship's Hull rating from the damage for each shot. Each hit also increases the enemy crew's Running Wounds Total by 1.

Reloading Cannons: The time it takes to reload a cannon depends on the operator's Gunnery skill.

Reloading

Gunnery Skill	Combat Actions to reload (character scale)	Number of Crew Combat rounds to reload (Crew Combat scale)
<25%	25	1D6
26%-50%	20	1D4
51-75%	15	1D3
75%-100%	10	1D2
100%+	5	1

Swivel guns always take 5 rounds/one Crew Combat round to reload.

Ammunition: A ton of cannonballs and powder contains fifty shots. Different guns take up different numbers of shots:

Weapon	Shots used
Swivel Gun	1
9-Pounder	1
18-pounder	2
24-pounder	3
45-pounder	5

Critical Hits on Ships

If a cannon attack scores a critical hit on a ship, then roll on the Critical Hits table. Re-roll if the result makes no sense (such as a mast falling on a rowboat– not that the chances of a rowboat being anything other than floating wreckage after a cannon hit are very high).

On a successful chain shot attack, roll 1D6 on the Critical Hits table.

Boarding Actions

See page 67 for rules on boarding actions.

Vapouring

Instead of shooting at an enemy crew, or attempting a boarding action, a boarding crew can engage in the practice called vapouring. This involves creating a din with shouts, banging or drumming on the sides of the ship, clashing swords, singing, cursing and otherwise intimidating the enemy. Vapouring can only be attempted when the other crew is close enough to be intimidated – generally, when the ships are in range of cannons.

To vapour, the boarding crew must make a Perform check. If successful, the enemy must make a Morale check immediately. A crew can vapour multiple times, but the enemy will only lose Morale from the effect once (the Games Master should roll the result of the Morale check secretly, so the pirates do not know if their intimidation had any effect).

Sinking Ships

A ship loses one Seaworthiness for every 10 points of damage it suffers from a single attack (i.e., a single hit from a cannon, not from a whole broadside).

Critical Hits

Roll	Damage
1-2	Mast Topples – one of the ship's masts falls, halving its movement, giving a –50% penalty to Shiphandling checks and dealing 4D6 Structure Points of damage.
3	Sail Falls – one of the ship's sails plummets to the deck, halving its movement, giving a –50% penalty to Shiphandling checks and adding 1D6 to the Crew's Running Wounds Total.
4-5	Rigging Damaged – the ship's rigging is damaged, preventing it from changing sail and giving a –20% penalty to Shiphandling checks.
6	Crew Maimed – the attack tears through the crew on deck, adding 2D6 to the Crew's Running Wounds Total.
7	Officer Struck – one of the officers is hit by the cannon ball. If he is a Player Character, he may spend a Hero Point to be merely thrown overboard instead of killed by the explosion.
8	Fire – a fire has broken out on board. See fires, page 46.
9-11	Especially Damaging Hit – roll cannon damage again.
12-13	Cannons Damaged – 1D4 of the ship's cannons are destroyed by the attack.
14-15	Hold Damaged – the ship's hold is hit, destroying 2D20% of the contents.
16-19	Holed Below The Waterline – the ship is holed, losing 2D6 Seaworthiness.
19	Rudder Damage: –50% penalty to Shiphandling checks.
20	Magazine Struck: Roll 1D6. On a 4+, the powder explodes, destroying the ship from the inside.

A ship that has lost all its Seaworthiness is now sinking – see page 45 for rules on sinking. A ship that has been boarded and captured can be scuttled, causing it to sink.

Destroying Ships

A ship reduced to 0 Structural Points has been smashed to smithereens. Wreckage from the ship continues to float, but the ship is no more. If a ship is carrying gunpowder and ammo aboard in a powder room, then this can be hit in a battle, either through a critical hit (see the critical hit table above), or through a Heroic Action as part of a boarding action. A ton of exploding gunpowder barrels does 6D6 structural damage.

Aftermath of Battles

Damage to crews is resolved normally after a battle at sea. A diminished pirate crew can often pick up replacement members from the survivors of a defeated prize, although men forced to go on the account are rarely loyal to their new pirate brethren, and may desert or rebel if the chance arises.

PORTS, TRADE & THE LAW

Ports are places to trade goods, to replenish supplies, to get uproariously drunk – but they also can be the seat of authority in the Caribbean, and so many pirates have ended their days hanging from a gallows at the end of a pier. Especially daring and powerful pirate gangs have even raided and sacked entire ports! Ports vary in size and importance. Every port will have a few docked ships, and some defences like cannons in a fort overlooking the harbour. The most important ports are built to resist full-scale attacks by enemy navies, and are more than a match for all but the most audacious rogue.

Pirate Ports are lawless places like Tortuga, Port Royal (before its destruction), the Bahamas or Madagascar where pirate ships can land safely. Everyone here is a rogue or villain, or at least friendly to them.

Local Ports and **Minor Trade Ports** are small ports which might only see a trade ship a handful of times per year. Pirates would sometimes prey on these ports, but more often, they come here to sell stolen goods. Many places will accept pirate ship cargos if they are sold cheaply enough, no questions asked. Some landowners are in league with the pirates, sheltering and supplying them in exchange for cheap goods.

Major Trade Ports are the heart of commerce in the modern age. Ships from Africa and Europe dock here regularly, bringing manufactured goods and slaves and taking on all the produce of the Caribbean and the Americas. These places are too law-abiding for the most part to accept known pirates, but disguised pirate vessels or less notorious villains can enter and trade. Taking a major trade port is a coup for a pirate gang.

Fortresses are rare in the Caribbean – these are major ports with extra guns and fortifications, the centre of Imperial power in a region.

Entering a Port

When a character enters a port, roll 1D20 and add his Reputation, then check the Pirate Reception table:

Pirate Reception

D20+Reputation	Result
<10	The character is not recognised, he may trade freely
11-20	The character is not recognised, but he is found to be suspicious
21-30	The character is recognised as a pirate, and may be attacked
30+	The character is recognised, and will be attacked if possible

Port Qualities

Port Type	Population	Defences	Soldiers	Ships in Port	Plunder
Pirate	~1,000	A few cannons, wooden fort	None	1D4 Pirate	
Local	~500	1D6 9 or 18-pounder cannons, wall	25 troops	1D4 Local	5x4D6 Common, 2x2D6 Rare, 50% chance of 1D4 Treasures
Minor	~2,000	2D6 18-pounder cannons, fortified house	100 troops	2D4 Local, 1 Merchant	10x4D6 Common, 5x2D6 Rare, 1D4 Treasures
Major	~5,000	2D6 24 pounder cannons, tower	250 troops	2D6 Local, 1D6 Merchant	10x8D6 Common, 5x4D6 Rare, 2D4 Treasures
Fortress	~25,000	3D6 24 pounder cannon, 1D6 45-pounder cannons, fortress wall	2,000 troops	3D6 Local, 2D6 Merchant, 1D6 Naval	20x8D6 Common, 6x8D6 Rare, 3D4 Treasures

Roll on the Pirate Reception table again if the character causes a nuisance, or acts in a very suspicious way (such as selling off stolen goods openly).

Selling Off Your Ill-Gotten Gains

Having a hold full of stolen spices, silks and blood-stained doubloons is all well and good, but if you cannot trade them for a willing wench and a flagon of ale, what good are they? There are several ways for a pirate to sell off stolen goods:

☠ **Legally:** If a character can enter a port without being identified as a pirate, then he can just use the normal trade rules (see below).

☠ **Smuggling:** A character can sell on the black market. This works like normal trade, but smugglers cannot expect to get as good a deal as a legal trader. Pirates dealing with smugglers therefore suffer a –50% penalty to their Influence attempts.

Trade

Characters can engage in legitimate trade as well as piracy.

The base sale price is listed in the Plunder tables on pages 53-57. Goods are bought at a price starting at half that listed in the tables. A character may make an Influence check to increase the price by +10% (+20% on a critical success). Supply and demand can also affect the price (see the Price Adjustment table).

Price Adjustment

Supply & Demand	Example	Price Change
Item is produced in bulk locally	Sugar in Barbados	–25%
Item is produced locally	Tobacco in Antigua	–10%
Item is in demand	Luxury goods in Martinique	+10%
Item is in desperate demand	Slaves in Antigua	+25%
Exotic Item	Coffee and Spices in Europe; Glassware and Fine Clothes in Caribbean	+10% or more

See the list of Plunder on pages 53-57 for details of goods that can be bought and sold.

The Law

While every governor and nation complains about piracy, the various navies are often slow to react to pirate attacks. Often, the ships sent on the hunt are too slow to catch the pirates, or unable to enter the shallow coves and shoals where the elusive thieves hide. It is not until the latter stages of the Age of Piracy that the Royal Navy starts sending smaller, faster ships to hunt down the pirates.

Governors may also employ mercenaries and privateers to deal with especially troublesome pirates. When a pirate attacks a ship, there is a chance that it attracts the attention of a governor. Take the pirate's crime from the Misdemeanour table, add the pirate's Reputation, and roll 1D100 to see if retribution is warranted.

Misdemeanour

Prize Taken	Chance of Retribution
Local	0%
Merchant, 100 tons or less cargo space	10%
Merchant, more than 100 tons	20%
Fluyt or convoy	30%
Galleon or Naval Vessel	40%
Port	50%

The retribution dispatched by the governor will depend on what ships are in harbour and what sway he has with his government.

Captured Pirates

If a pirate is captured by the authorities, then his remaining few days are likely to be unpleasant. If there is time and a nearby fortress, or if the authorities wish to question the pirates, then the condemned men will be brought back to a port and imprisoned there before they are tried. They may even be sent back to Europe to face trial there – this is especially true for famous pirates (Reputation 30+), whose trials will attract great attention and prestige. On the other hand, some of the ordinary pirates may simply be hung there and then, to warn others of the wages of sin.

In a trial, witnesses of the pirate's crimes will be brought forward. Often, a pirate's crew will turn against him, claiming to have been forced onto the account on pain of death and pleading for clemency. Offering pardons to pirates is a cheap and easy way to deal with the problem, as is offering them commissions as privateers. Such loopholes will only be offered, though, if the pirate is worth more to the authorities alive than dead.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

The basic structure of *RuneQuest Pirates* is a simple one – roll up your character, your ship and your crew, then go off in search of plunder. That basic core remains true for all these campaigns, but there are many ways to explore that same pirate experience with the players.

Historical Piracy

While there is a wealth of books and research material about pirates, most will just point you at the classic '*A General History of the Most Notorious Pyrates*' by Captain Charles Johnson (or Daniel Defoe, depending on who you ask). This classic book lists the deeds and crimes of, well, the most notorious pirates, and is an excellent source of adventure ideas. The simplest historical campaign is a relatively random one – few pirates had a cunning plan for conquest and plunder. More complex games can delve into the movements of empires and religions in that chaotic period.

Most historical games will tend towards the gritty and the unpleasant. Non-Player Characters are more likely to die of dysentery or scurvy than in a dramatic battle at sea. Few pirates prospered, but their own incompetence and lack of discipline was matched only by the navy's indolence and poor tactics. Historical campaigns will also touch on unpleasant issues, like slavery, and (Anne Bonny and Mary Read aside) there is little scope for female characters to get involved in the action.

Historical campaigns appeal to players who are willing to delve into the details and learn about the period. Given the length of the Golden Age, it is best to focus on one period or the career of a particular pirate (Blackbeard or Bartholomew Roberts are prime candidates), and gather all the information you can about them. The characters could be crew on board those ships – or even take on the roles of historical figures. For example, Captain Roberts (one of the most successful pirates on record) travelled for much of his career with a crew of pirates who practically scream 'Player Character' like Anastis (a huge brute, proud of his physical strength), dour Gillespie, or La Palisse, who stayed loyal to his battered old sloop even

when Roberts captured bigger and bigger ships for his crew to use.

Another option is to have the characters be the crew on board a merchant ship that is attacked or taken by pirates. They are forced to go on the account at sword-point due to their skills at sailing, and now have to make the best of a dangerous situation. Do the characters try to escape and turn on their criminal comrades, or do they embrace the pirate lifestyle and plunder what they can until the law catches up with them?

A Timeline of Important Historical Events

1492: Columbus discovers the New World.
1494: The Treaty of Tordesillas divides the New World between Spain and Portugal.
1519: Cortez lands in Mexico.
1630: Buccaneers settle on Tortuga.
1674: Third Anglo-Dutch war ends.
1688-1671: Henry Morgan's raids on Panama and Portobello.
1672-1678: Franco-Dutch war.
1688-1697: Nine Year War, involving most of the European powers.
1692: Earthquake destroys Port Royal.
1695: Henry Avery captures the *Gunsway* (*Gang-i-Sawai*), the flagship of the Mogul of India.
1697: Spanish cede the west half of Hispaniola to the French.
1716: Blackbeard begins his career.
1718: Blackbeard slain.
1719: Bartholomew Roberts begins his career.
1720: Calico Jack hanged; Mary Read and Anne Bonnie 'plead on their bellies' to escape the noose.
1722: Bartholomew Roberts killed.

in importance to the more established colonies in the south. Trade with the East is expanding quickly, and the foundations for the European empires of the coming centuries are being laid. The globe is being explored – the Australian continent has been discovered, and better charts are being made. Navigation is still something of an art, not a science. While methods for discovering one's longitude (north/south location) are well known (relying on taking sightings of the horizon and the sun or stars), correct measurement of latitude is not yet possible, and will not be until more accurate clocks are made.

The Reformation is still a major factor in European politics. Spain and France are Catholic; England and the Netherlands are Protestant. Religious civil wars regularly tear the continent apart.

Spain is the most established of the great powers in the Caribbean, but its fortunes in Europe are waning. Its ports are the oldest and best fortified, but are only lightly protected. Their Dutch rivals are wealthy, but the Netherlands have few holdings in the Caribbean, and their attention is mainly focussed on trade with the East. England and France are both expansionist powers, establishing new colonies and sending more ships into the region.

The Caribbean in the Golden Age of Piracy is divided between the Great Powers of Europe, primarily Spain, England, France and the Netherlands. By the 1700s, the original treasure of the Caribbean – the silver and gold of South America – was nearly gone, but the islands were becoming valuable producers of various goods, notably sugar and tobacco. Diseases brought by the early explorers ravaged the native populations, forcing the importation of many thousands of slaves from Africa to work the plantations. The various ports and settlements fought proxy wars for the powers – it was a lawless, dangerous region.

Elsewhere in the world, the colonies on the east coast of North America are thriving, but are still secondary

Buccaneers & Privateers

Early Spanish settlers had let pigs and other animals run wild on many of the islands of the Caribbean. In the mid-1600s, bands of sailors, thieves, rogues and vagabonds took to living on these pigs, cooking their flesh in barbeques called *boucans*. The Spanish authorities drove the buccaneers away from the settled parts of Hispaniola and the other islands, earning the enmity of the rogues. The buccaneers would raid Spanish ports in retaliation, stealing and looting. The lawless buccaneers are a ready source of men for treasurer hunters and piracy. They are also masters of the lawless port of Tortuga.

In 1668-1671, one of the most famous of the buccaneers, the Welshman Henry Morgan, leads several major attacks on the Spanish towns of Portobello and Panama. He carries away a considerable fortune, and does such damage to Spanish interests in the Caribbean that he is rewarded with the governorship of Port Royal on Jamaica.

Technically, Morgan and many of his compatriots were *privateers*, not pirates. The distinction is a subtle one – a privateer sails and fights under a letter of marque granted by some governor, representing one of the powers. Henry Morgan got his commission from the English Governor of Jamaica, which legally authorised him to make war on the Spanish ports he attacked. He was effectively a mercenary, not a criminal, at least under English law. The Spanish would have hung him as a thief if they caught him. The practice of privateering waxed and waned depending on events in Europe – when Spain goes to war with England, then every pirate in the Caribbean will sign up with one side or the other, so they can loot ships and sell their prizes legally in the port of the opposing side. When the war ends, the privateers may promise to become law-abiding traders, but the lure of piracy and the freedom of the seas is often too strong.

The Golden Age of Piracy

The period known as the Golden Age of Piracy lasted roughly from the sacking of Panama in 1671 to the 1720s, when Woodes Rogers' offer of the pardon to the pirates of Nassau Port was largely accepted. The rise of the British Navy's pirate-hunting efforts were largely responsible for the decline of the pirates.

During the golden age, there were hundreds of pirate attacks on ships in the Caribbean. In any given year, there would be four or five notorious pirate captains at large. A captain might be active for a few years before retiring to live off his ill-gotten gains, or when he was caught and tried. Most captains were traders or even soldiers who went rogue and turned to piracy.

The piratical lifestyle was appealing to many sailors, who worked in very harsh conditions for little pay. Instead of being one of ten sailors on a cargo ship, risking life and limb for a few schillings and watching your masters back in Europe reap the huge financial rewards of a successful voyage, you could join a pirate ship. With so many crew on board a pirate ship, there was much less work, and the promise of vast rewards. The pirates were lazy, drunk, undisciplined and often delighted in their viciousness and depravity, but their ways were undeniably alluring. Many crews willingly followed their captain when he turned pirate, so long as he kept bringing down prizes.

The Caribbean

The buccaneer port of Tortuga is the metaphorical and geographical heart of the pirate Caribbean. This lawless town is located on the north coast of the great island of Hispaniola. The island itself is, as of 1697, divided into two sections. The western section is St. Domingue, and is owned by the French, who are allies to the buccaneers. St. Domingue is known for its sugar plantations, and many now-respectable and wealthy landowners here are actually former buccaneers. The east side of the island, Santo Domingo, is still Spanish, but has been so ravaged by pirate raids that it is now very poor and of little importance.

To the west of Hispaniola is Cuba, the major Spanish holding in the Caribbean. It is a wealthy island, with many rich plantations. The fortress of El Morro is the centre of the Spanish military forces, while the capital of Havana is the place to trade goods. In the Caribbean, the Spanish also hold Porto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago, and once held Jamaica. Porto Rico is poor, but well-fortified, and is used by the Spanish navy as a base. Trinidad is a troubled colony, prone to violence, but it is better than its neighbour Tobago, which has been plunged into near-anarchy by repeated wars and invasions.

In the west, in South America, Spain has several other colonies. The famous Treasure Fleets bring the wealth of these colonies, especially silver and gold, through the Caribbean en route to Spain.

The English seized Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655, and the island has prospered as a source of sugar. They also hold many of the islands in the north of the Caribbean, from the treacherous shoals of the Bahamas to many of the Virgin and Leeward Islands, as well as the Cayman Islands. The Bahamas (especially

Nassau Port in New Providence, home of the infamous Blackbeard) and Caymans are more pirate haunts than English, but St. Kitts, Barbados, Nevis and Montserrat are all thriving.

The French holdings in the Caribbean are more tenuous. They share St. Kitt's with the English, St. Martin's with the Dutch and Hispaniola with the Spanish. They also have the spice island of Grenada, and the prosperous colonies on Guadeloupe and Martinique.

Finally, the Dutch claim many of the other islands in the Caribbean, but all too often these are used as pirate bases. The main Dutch trade town of Willemstad, rivalling Havana in importance, is on Curacao.

Techniques

Research: Between the internet and the library, there is a wealth of information on piracy out there, which will give plenty of ideas for adventures. Gather as much information as you can, and encourage the players to immerse themselves too (alternatively, have the characters live sheltered lives or suffer from amnesia, so they can learn about the historical setting in-character).

Handouts: Research will give rise to plenty of documents and texts from the era of piracy, and players love handouts. Descriptions of famous pirates, geographical treatises on the islands, copies of laws and treaties – print them out and tack them up around the gaming area. Use copies of maps from the era instead of modern maps.

Don't Sweat The Details: While keeping close to the historical ideals is necessary for this style of play, actually having fun and playing a game is even more important. The Games Master should never let the game stop because of some historical inconsistency. If two players are arguing over exactly what sort of rigging was in common use in 1720, get them to postpone the discussion until after the game and move onto plundering ships. The aim of historical campaigns is to explore history through a game, and the game should come first.

Campaign Ideas:

Shipwrecked: The game begins with the characters being cast up on a desert island following a terrible storm that destroyed several ships in a convoy. The characters are the only survivors. They have to survive on the island for some time, until a pirate vessel arrives on the island to careen. The only way off the island is to sign up with the pirates.

Pirate Hunters: Another option is to cast the players as naval officers, in pursuit of pirates. Give them the bare minimum of resources (an armed sloop, and a crew of sullen sailors who are already grumbling and mutinous) and pit them against historical pirates. Can the player do better than real-world pirate hunters? The Games Master can just consult history books for the actions and strengths of the various notable pirates.

Cinematic Piracy

A cinematic game covers much the same ground as a historical campaign, but takes the best bits instead of holding itself to actual history. Pirates were the pulp villains of their day, and pirate movies invariably involve swashbuckling, dramatic rescues and duels, good-hearted rogues or monstrous foes, castles on crumbling cliffs, massive battles at sea, and piles of gold and jewels. In short, cinematic games should ooze coolness and drama. At the same time, a large part of the appeal of pirate game is the setting, so the Games Master should always emphasise and cherish the classic elements of piracy.

In a cinematic game, emotion and character are far more important than treasure. A character should not become a pirate just to steal gold – there should always be some other reason for turning pirate. Perhaps he wants revenge on all civilisation, *a la* Captain Nemo; perhaps some diabolical relative has framed him for a terrible crime, and he has to hide among the outlaws until he can reclaim his fortune; perhaps some noble woman is rebelling against an arranged marriage, and intends to humiliate her intended husband by defeating his naval vessel.

One trick is to ensure that each Player Character is linked to at least one other character. Character A might be the old shipmate of Character B; Character B might be lusting after young Miss C; Character D is secretly C's old uncle, who ran away to sea as a young man and turned pirate. In this way, even if each character has their own dramatic tale unfolding, the various stories cross over and allow the characters to act as a group.

This also opens up a scope for betrayal – pirates are thieves, after all, and unexpected reversals when your old shipmate turns on you are par for the course.

Techniques

Think Cinema: Frame scenes and situations as if your game was a big-budget movie. Always leap into conflict (whether it is an argument, an important decision or a swordfight) as soon as possible. Reflect the mood of a scene in the surroundings and the weather – storms signify trouble, rainstorms despair, sunshine joy and so forth.

Get Personal: Tie everything into the characters. A villain should never just be a bad guy – he should be related to the characters or have some other prior connection to them. Try to evoke emotion as much as possible, and throw Hero Points around for dramatic speeches and cool ideas.

Campaign Ideas

The Treasure Map: *Treasure Island* did it first, but it is a classic for a reason. A band of pirates (say, Henry Morgan's buccaneers) bury a vast treasure. They draw a map describing its location, then divide the map up between them. The Player Characters have inherited or otherwise obtained a few parts of the map. You need all the map to find the treasure (there is no X marking the spot; the location of the treasure is determined by drawing lines between various landmarks). The first part of the campaign involves the characters searching for the other sections of the map, which are scattered over the whole Caribbean in the hands of former pirates; the second part involves finding the mysterious island, reconstructing the map, and recovering the treasure (optionally – the mysterious island is home to hostile natives, or ancient ruins, or a giant gorilla, or dinosaurs).

Revenge!: The characters were once passengers on a ship that was attacked by a notorious pirate. They survived, but everything they owned and loved was taken from them. Now, they have banded together for revenge – only to discover that their old nemesis took a pardon from the Spanish king, and is now a wealthy and respected plantation owner (he is still secretly sponsoring pirate attacks, of course). The characters have to battle their foe's minions and expose his

pirate connections to the Spanish court, before a final confrontation in the villain's castle.

Libertalia!: Some sources (like *A General History of Pyrates*) claim that a free pirate nation called Libertalia was founded by a renegade French caption named Mission. Stealing a Dutch slave ship, he and his crew declared themselves in opposition to all the powers and states of Europe, as well as the Church. All men were equal; all goods would be held in common. Driven by these beliefs, and by the white flag of liberty, they colonised a part of northern Madagascar.

While there were certainly pirate hideouts in Madagascar, it is unlikely that any were as organised as Libertalia was supposed to be. The idea of a pirate nation is great for gaming though – just transplant Libertalia to the Caribbean, and give the characters a great home base to sail from!

Supernatural Piracy

Supernatural elements can be added to either a cinematic or historical pirates game. A little bit of weirdness can fit nicely into either style of game, while a whole lot of weirdness moves your campaign into the field of alternate history or outright fantasy. No matter what supernatural elements you add, the essential core of piracy has to be maintained. There have to be empires and colonies trading in the Caribbean, and there have to be wild, cruel men on ships raiding and stealing from these empires. There has to be something valuable sought by those empires, something that drew people to these warm seas.

Pirates & Runes: Back in Europe, runes are rare. A noble family might have a dozen runes, which the head of the family integrates and holds until his death, whereupon his heir takes on the runes. A lord's power depends not only on the lands he owns or his standing at court or his personal wealth, but also on the Rune-magic he wields. To hold a Rune is to be a noble. During the Middle Ages, knights would ride into battle, proudly proclaiming their lineage through the coat-of-runes on their shields.

In Europe, every Rune is in the possession of a noble family. Elsewhere, there are still a few wild Runes, Runes by which a man might advance into the nobility. Some have been found in Africa, others in

the Orient, but it was in South America that Cortez found many hundreds of Runes. He returned to Spain a living god, spitting magic fire from his mouth and eyes. Fearful of his power, the Spanish court had him exiled, and some say that the Immortal Conqueror has fled to somewhere in the Caribbean; others insist that he died, but his tomb is filled with unclaimed Runes.

Today, the Spanish treasure fleets carry cargoes of unintegrated Runes back to Europe, guarded by noble wizards who blast English ships with skyfire spells. Thanks to Cortez's discoveries, Spain enjoys a great measure of magical superiority over her rivals in the Old World. In the New World, though, there is a new breed of magic-workers – common men who found Runes in the jungles and islands of the Caribbean, and who now raid the Spanish fleets for more power. The black flag of a pirate captain, marked with the Death rune, is a feared sight across the ocean.

Of late, more and more English ships have been seen in the Caribbean, hunting pirates for their Runes. Executioner's Dock at Wapping has become a font of Runic power for the English crown, and the pirates who prey on Spain are now caught in the arcane clash of the two great powers.

In this game, Runes should be added to the Plunder tables as either an Uncommon or Rare treasure. Few Europeans other than wealthy aristocrats have Runes, but they can be found in South America and on the islands. Water Runes wash up on the shore, fire Runes shimmer like mirages in the summer heat, death Runes manifest when murders are committed unjustly, harmony Runes on the horizon and so forth. Runes can also be taken from a corpse at the moment of death.

Pirates & Ghosts: Tales of ghost ships and spectral pirates are classics of the genre, and there are numerous ways to incorporate them. One subtle way is to have a ghost appear to only one of the Player Characters, a mysterious spectre who is guarding him or guiding him to a particular destiny. Pirates live violent, dangerous lives, and there is plenty of opportunity for a violent death to give rise to a ghost. Perhaps a ghost is trying to ensure that the characters eventually track down and kill the pirate who murdered him in the first place.

Alternatively, what if going on the account opens the characters' eyes to the spirit world? What if all those symbols of death and mortality associated with pirates had a deeper, occult meaning? Perhaps every pirate vessel had its own cloud of angry, vengeful ghosts trailing after it. Captains might interrogate ghosts for intelligence about other ships and trade routes. Certain ghosts might be especially sought after – the spectre of a particularly talented navigator would be a treasure worth killing for. Piracy could be the new form of necromancy…

Pirates & Voodoo: The *vodun* religion was carried from West Africa to the Caribbean by slaves, and soon acquired many followers among escaped slaves and on the islands. There were many escaped slaves among the pirates, who lived at the fringes of society, so it is possible that they learned something of the *loa* spirits and how to placate and command them. In this game, the Loa are powerful spirits who can be tapped for power if you know what rites and gifts to offer them.

While some practitioners of *vodun* are careful and respectful when dealing with the Loa, pirates take a more direct approach. With blades of cold iron quenched in stolen holy water, they go to the places where the spirit world encroaches onto the real world, to islands that appear only at the darkest hours of the night, to haunted crossroads sacred to Legba, to steaming jungles where the trees speak with old voices out of Africa. There, they attack the *loa* until they submit, enslaving them to serve the pirates.

Tim Powers is the absolute master of this type of alternate-history game, and his book, *On Stranger Tides*, mixes excellent pirate adventure with voodoo and Greek myth.

Pirates & Clockwork: In the year 955 AH, Taqi al-Din Mohammed ibn Ma'ruf (peace be upon him) started the Great Observatory of Istanbul and ushered in a golden age of scientific and technological innovation within the Sublime Ottoman State. One year after the construction of the Great Observatory, a fisherman in Cyprus discovered a strange machine which was brought to al-Din for study. Ottoman scientists reworked the device into an effective tool for mapmaking and navigation, while other tinkers used the principles behind the device's operation to process census data, plan crop rotations and provision armies. Sultan Murad III was so enamoured by the devices that he sent out a fleet of specially-equipped ships to map the seven seas for the glory of Allah and the Sublime Ottoman State.

Minor Loa

The Loa are spirits (see *The Spirit World* in the *Runequest Companion*. A minor loa is described below – this particular one holds authority over storms and foul weather.

STR	–	
CON	–	
DEX	–	
SIZ	–	
INT	3D6	(10)
POW	3D6+6	(16)
CHA	3D6	(10)
HP	16	
MP	16	

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage
Touch of the Loa	60%	1D6 damage+1D2

Special Rules

Combat Actions:	2
Strike Rank:	+20
Movement:	16m
Traits:	Recurring, Dominant Possession, Night Sight
Skills:	Dodge 60%, Lore (nature) 70%, Lore (spirit world) 40%, Persistence 50%, Stealth 40%

If placated or defeated, the spirit can be bound to a pirate. As this particular Loa is a storm-spirit, then the pirate who commands it could gain one of the following abilities:

☠ Summon a storm once per month

☠ Ignore the penalties to Shiphandling

☠ Channel the force of the storm, allowing him to cast the *Skybolt* spell.

This brief flowering of technology ended in the year 958 AH, when al-Din's calculations showed that, despite the sighting of a comet seen by the soothsayers of Sultan Murad III, his armies would not prevail against a smaller but better-prepared Persian army. The Great Observatory was destroyed and the exploratory fleet's crews denied return to port.

Many of the ships made their way to Europe, where their crews were promptly detained and interrogated. The French were the first to openly accept the exiles, with la vie Sufisme informing discussion in the salons of the wealthy and French merchant ships receiving accurate maps of the Mediterranean and north African coasts. The other great powers followed suit, building their own 'Hajji Devices' for their own use. These devices, and the maps they generated, were well-kept state secrets, allowing easy access to the wealth of the New World and the Indies...

... until a French ship's captain named Mission disappeared with a Hajji device and, a few months later, the first 'Libertatian Gazetteer' appeared in the sailor's taverns of Marseilles, providing full access to the trade routes of the Great Powers and their tame merchant houses.

Thirty years later, the Spanish main bears the marks of all of these influences. Freebooters sailing under the flag of Libertatia trade booty for Hajji codes with artificers in the free city of Port o' Clocks, while Sufee Levellers from the Republic of Rhode Island open safe harbours and open markets throughout the New World. Buccaneers speak with dread of the Scylla, a Hajji Machine set to watch over the treacherous bay of Cartagena, while Jesuit artificers work towards a day when the machines will perfectly reflect every aspect of God's creation.

In this setting, ancient Greek clockworks have been developed by the Ottomans and later by Europe, giving rise to a world of brass computers and clockwork cyberpunk. A pirate might steal the navigational data for a merchant ship and feed it into his brig's onboard Hajji Machine (or hasher, as pirate argot has it), allowing him to sail precisely to the location of the merchant and intercept it. When within range, remorseless and terrible engines give precise firing solutions to the banks of cannons…

Clockwork Equipment

Hajji Device: This is the most common form of clockwork computer, used for navigation. The Hajji device is a heavy contraption of brass wheels, lodestones and glass dials, roughly the size of a buckler shield. A ship's destination and course are input as numbers, and the Hajji device automatically calculates the ship's course. A clever operator can sail to any point on the surface of the globe by correctly programming these machines.

Calculating Engine: Calculating engines are made from rank upon rank of Hajji devices. They are powered by hand-cranks or treadmills, although it is said that the English have developed a steam-powered machine that runs far quicker than any other engine. A calculating engine can do mathematics at great speed and with perfect accuracy. In battle, calculating engines are used to provide firing solutions (giving a bonus to Gunnery checks – an average calculating engine gives a bonus of +20% to hit, and more powerful military models can give up to +75% to hit).

Other calculating engines are used to produce the secret books of codes and logs that are vital for navigation with Hajji devices.

Brazen Head: A curiosity, Brazen Heads are small but very clever calculating engines. They speak using an intricate series of valves and bellows, and can hold discourse on a variety of topics. These Machine Intellects are no more than amusing toys in the eyes of most people, with no more true intelligence than a parrot or an Irishman – but those who listen to the advice of this clacking automata can sometimes learn strange secrets…

Clockwork Hand: Hook hands and peg-legs are a thing of the past! While no artificer has managed to create a living automaton, they can make replacement limbs and even clockwork hands that function almost as well as the real thing, so long as they are wound regularly.

Pirates & Dragons: The jungles of South America held a terrible secret – the true rulers of the Aztec empire were the dragons. These terrible lizards squatted atop stepped pyramids and demanded gold and bloody sacrifices from their followers. Cortez and his conquistadors turned dragon-slayer, and after many decades of war, the Dragon Empire was toppled and all the great wyrms were slain.

A few eggs survived though, and they can be hatched through alchemical means. Dragons take many centuries to grow to full size, but beasts as large as small ships are not unheard of even in this day and age. Some dragons are owned by various nobles, others are used as weapons by the navy. Some have even fallen into the hands of pirates – even a small dragon can destroy a prize's rigging, paralysing the merchant ship and allowing the pirates to catch it easily. Dragons instinctively crave gold, and pirates who fail to find enough coin to keep their dragon happy can find their secret weapon turn on them.

There are rumours, of course, of an elder dragon that fled the dragonslayers and took refuge somewhere in the Caribbean…

Optionally for this campaign, the dragons are the highly evolved descendants of the dinosaurs, who somehow survived the asteroid impact that wiped the rest out. Speaking of which, the Caribbean is one possible location for the lost city of Atlantis. Pirates with Altantean supertechnology powered by meteor shards, anyone?

Otherworldly Piracy

Players of traditional *RuneQuest* campaigns may wish to integrate piracy into their fantasy games. Most fantasy games take place in something approximating a sort of quasi-medieval age, so the ship designs in the Ships & the Sea chapter are inappropriate. The *RuneQuest Companion* has more suitable vessels for a fantasy pirate game. Fantasy worlds rarely include gunpowder – this can be replaced by magic, or just dropped entirely. Pirates can capture prizes by boarding actions and with bows instead of with cannon-fire.

Finally, it might also be necessary to adjust the prices for treasures to something more reasonable – most fantasy worlds have a lot more gold and jewels than the Caribbean, so the cost of treasure should be reduced significantly.

Glorantha: The Middle Sea Empire's trading ships are the only vessels that regularly cross the high seas, and those mighty galleons carry a king's ransom in gold, trade goods and magic. Pirates from any of the barbarian lands along the south coast of Genertela could attack the Middle Sea Empire, possibly secretly aided by the privateer-sponsoring Empire of Wyrm's Friends.

The eastern islands of Vithela make an excellent Caribbean-analogue for Glorantha.

Pirates on the Seas of Fate: The many worlds of the Multiverse, like the settings of *Elric* and *Hawkmoon* are connected by the mysterious Sea of Fate, where the Black Ship endlessly sails, carrying heroes to where they are needed. What if, by some whim of chaos, a pirate vessel gained the power to sail between the worlds? The crew of that ship would be both blessed and cursed – unable to return home, but able to plunder all the infinite Multiverse. This is a high-fantasy game, where pirates armed with flame-cannons from Granbretan and demon-calling magic from Melniboné prey on ships from a thousand different times and worlds. Every week, the crew sails into a new and stranger reality.

The Island of the Other World: For an otherworld game that maintains all the traditional pirate elements, try this. A terrible magical storm sweeps over the whole Caribbean. When it clears, it is discovered that the world has *changed*. There is no sign of the mainland, of the Spanish main or of the colonies to the north. In their places are strange new lands, filled with strange new people. The whole Caribbean has been drawn through some magical portal and deposited in the midst of a truly new world. Will the differences between Spain and English be forgotten in the face of contact with non-human races? Can human civilisation survive on this new planet? What force drew a whole sea and all the islands and ships it contained to this new world? What horrors await the pirate explorers on the mainland? And is there a way home?

One nice thing about this game is that you can start it as a historical pirate game, then suddenly spin the characters off into utmost strangeness.

Scurvy Dogs & Other Rogues

A miscellanea of generic Non-Player Characters…

Pirate, Scurvy Dog

This is the average pirate in a poor crew – a penniless buccaneer, a newly recruited pirate or a thug in a port.

Characteristics: STR 10, CON 11, SIZ 11, INT 10, POW11, DEX 10, CHA 9

Skills: Acrobatics 25% (22%), Athletics 35% (32%), Boating 35%, Dodge 24% (21%), Evaluate 20%, Gunnery 20%, Lore (animal) 15%, Lore (world) 25%, Perception 41%, Shiphandling 40%, Sing 14%, Throwing 15% (12%)

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/5
3-6	Left Leg	–/5
7-9	Abdomen	1/6
10-12	Chest	1/7
13-15	Right Arm	1/4
16-18	Left Arm	1/4
19-20	Head	–/5

Buff Coat: –3% Skill Penalty

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Cutlass	50% (47%)	1D6+1 / 3
Musket	40% (37%)	2D6

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +10, *Damage Modifier:* +0, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Buff Coat, Cutlass, Musket, 3D6 reales

Pirate, Devilish Cut-Throat
Seasoned

This is an experienced, dangerous pirate – an officer on most ships or an ordinary hand in the most successful and infamous crews.

Characteristics: STR 14, CON 12, SIZ 14, INT 11, POW12, DEX 12, CHA 13

Skills: Acrobatics 32% (29%), Athletics 51% (48%), Boating 39%, Dodge 23% (20%), Evaluate 21%, Gunnery 33%, Handiwork 21%, Lore (animal) 17%, Lore (world) 26%, Shiphandling 51%, Sing 18%, Throwing 17% (14%)

Legendary Ability: Pet

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/6
3-6	Left Leg	–/6
7-9	Abdomen	1/7
10-12	Chest	1/8
13-15	Right Arm	1/5
16-18	Left Arm	1/5
19-20	Head	–/6

Buff Coat: –3% Skill Penalty

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Cutlass	66% (63%)	1D6+1+1D2 / 3
Musket	42% (39%)	2D6
Pistol	30% (39%)	2D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +11, *Damage Modifier:* +1D2, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Dagger, Cutlass, Musket, Two Pistols, Grenade, Compass

Pirate, Quartermaster
Veteran

This big brute is the strongman on a pirate ship, there to maintain discipline and be the captain's enforcer.

Characteristics: STR 16, CON 16, SIZ 16, INT 10, POW10, DEX 10, CHA 11

Skills: Acrobatics 25% (22%), Athletics 56% (53%), Boating 41%, Dodge 9% (6%), Handiwork 30%, Influence 41%, Lore (animal) 15%, Lore (world) 20%, Persistence 30%, Shiphandling 40%, Sing 16%, Resilience 64%, Throwing 15% (12%)

Legendary Abilities: Infamous, Vice

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	0/7
3-6	Left Leg	0/7
7-9	Abdomen	1/8
10-12	Chest	1/9
13-15	Right Arm	1/6
16-18	Left Arm	1/6
19-20	Head	–/7

Buff Coat: –3% Skill Penalty

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Cutlass	66% (63%)	1D6+1+1D4 / 3
Whip	41% (38%)	1D3
Pistol	21% (18%)	2D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +17, *Damage Modifier:* +1D4, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Cutlass, Whip

Recommended Books & Sources

Reference Books
A General History of the Most Notorious Pyrates, Captain Charles Johnson
Life Among the Pirates, David Cordingly
Black Barty, Aubrey Burl
The Pirate Wars, Peter Earle

Novels
On Stranger Tides, Tim Powers
The Pyrates, George MacDonald Fraser

Games
Sid Meier's Pirates
The *Monkey Island* series.

Pirate Captain
Master

This is an exceptional pirate captain – not up there with Blackbeard, but more successful than most who go on the account.

Characteristics: STR 13, CON 12, SIZ 11, INT 14, POW 16, DEX 13, CHA 15
Skills: Athletics 36% (31%), Boating 23%, Dodge 76% (71%), Evaluate 25%, First Aid 19%, Gunnery 37%, Influence 74%, Lore (navigation) 44%, Lore (world) 44%, Perception 38%, Persistence 66%, Resilience 48%, Shiphandling 84%

Legendary Abilities: Fearsome Aura

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/5
3-6	Left Leg	–/5
7-9	Abdomen	1/6
10-12	Chest	1 or 3/7
13-15	Right Arm	1 or 3/4
16-18	Left Arm	1 or 3/4
19-20	Head	–/5

Buff Coat, Duellist's Half-Cape: –5% Skill Penalty

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Cutlass	96% (91%)	1D6+1 / 3
Pistol	53% (48%)	2D4
Musket	23% (18%)	2D6

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3, *Strike Rank:* +13, *Damage Modifier:* +0, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Cutlass, Four Pistols, Musket.

Town Guard

An average guard. These statistics would also do for any troublesome craftsmen or other citizens who take up arms against a pirate raid.

Characteristics: STR 12, CON 11, SIZ 11, INT 10, POW 9, DEX 11, CHA 11

Skills: Athletics 33% (26%), Craft (any one) 30%, Dodge 35% (28%), Evaluate 40%, Influence 21%, Lore (world) 20%, Perception 39%, Persistence 39%, Resilience 47%

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/5
3-6	Left Leg	–/5
7-9	Abdomen	1/6
10-12	Chest	1/7
13-15	Right Arm	1/4
16-18	Left Arm	1/4
19-20	Head	5/5

Buff Coat, Helmet: –7% Skill Penalty

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Polearm	63% (56%)	1D8+1 / 3
Musket	41% (34%)	2D6

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +10, *Damage Modifier:* +0, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Halbard, Musket, Helmet, Buff Coat, 4D6 reales

Fat Merchant
Seasoned

This charming character might be an agent of one of the great trading companies, or a plantation owner. Either way, he is very fat and very rich.

Characteristics: STR 10, CON 13, SIZ 16, INT 15, POW13, DEX 8, CHA 8

Skills: Courtesy 52%, Evaluate 65%, Influence 68%, Lore (logistics) 35%, Lore (world) 35%, Persistence 53%, Sleight 18%

Legendary Ability: Contacts

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/6
3-6	Left Leg	–/6
7-9	Abdomen	–/7
10-12	Chest	–/8
13-15	Right Arm	–/5
16-18	Left Arm	–/5
19-20	Head	–/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Rapier	38%	1D8 / 3
Pistol	28%	2D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +11, *Damage Modifier:* +0, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Rapier, Pistol, Fine Clothes, 4D10x100 reales

Governor
Seasoned

This figure, with his fine wig and patrician attitude, could be the governor of one of the richer colonies or another representative of the powers of Europe.

Characteristics: STR 12, CON 14, SIZ 10, INT 14, POW16, DEX 10, CHA 15

Skills: Courtesy 60%, Dance 30%, Influence 75%, Language (any other) 34%, Lore (world) 59%, Perception 70%, Persistence 36%, Riding 45%

Legendary Ability: Contacts

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/5
3-6	Left Leg	–/5
7-9	Abdomen	–/6
10-12	Chest	–/7
13-15	Right Arm	–/4
16-18	Left Arm	–/4
19-20	Head	–/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Rapier	47%	1D8 / 3
Pistol	35%	2D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +12, *Damage Modifier:* +0, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Rapier, Fine Clothes, Pistol, 4D10x100 reales

Governor's Daughter

Beautiful, cultured, genteel, but with a fiery spirit – a prize worth taking for any pirate.

Characteristics: STR 9, CON 13, SIZ 8, INT 14, POW 15, DEX 14, CHA 16

Skills: Courtesy 60%, Craft (needlework) 34%, Dance 34%, Dodge 21%, Influence 66%, Lore (world) 34%, Perception 35%, Persistence 36%, Riding 45%, Sing 25%.

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/5
3-6	Left Leg	1/5
7-9	Abdomen	–/6
10-12	Chest	–/7
13-15	Right Arm	–/4
16-18	Left Arm	–/4
19-20	Head	–/5

Leather Trews: –2% Skill Penalty

Weapons
None

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3, *Strike Rank:* +14, *Damage Modifier:* –1D2, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Fine clothes.

Sailor

An average sailor.

Characteristics: STR 13, CON 12, SIZ 12, INT 10, POW 11, DEX 10, CHA 9

Skills: Acrobatics 35%, Athletics 43%, Boating 38%, Dodge 13%, Gunnery 40%, Handiwork 30%, Lore (animal) 15%, Lore (world) 25%, Resilience 28%, Shiphandling 30%, Sing 14%, Throwing 15%

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/5
3-6	Left Leg	–/5
7-9	Abdomen	–/6
10-12	Chest	–/7
13-15	Right Arm	–/4
16-18	Left Arm	–/4
19-20	Head	–/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Cutlass	52%	1D6+1/3
Pistol	40%	2D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +10, *Damage Modifier:* +0, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Cutlass, Pistol

Officer of the Royal Navy
Seasoned

Characteristics: STR 13, CON 12, SIZ 12, INT 14, POW 10, DEX 10, CHA 12

Skills: Acrobatics 25% (22%), Athletics 43% (40%), Boating 38%, Dodge 18% (15%), First Aid 19%, Gunnery 64%, Handiwork 44%, Influence 32%, Lore (animal) 19%, Lore (world) 29%, Perception 34%, Resilience 34%, Shiphandling 54%, Sing 17%, Throwing 15%

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/5
3-6	Left Leg	–/5
7-9	Abdomen	1/6
10-12	Chest	1/7
13-15	Right Arm	1/4
16-18	Left Arm	1/4
19-20	Head	–/5

Buff Jacket: –3%

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Rapier	63% (60%)	1D8 / 3
Pistol	50% (47%)	2D4

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 2, *Strike Rank:* +12, *Damage Modifier:* +0, *Movement:* 4m, *Equipment:* Rapier, Pistol

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Campaign Ideas

Crew Sheet

Ship: **# of Men:**

                             # Injured:

                             # Healthy:

Base Skill:

Crew Skill	%	Officer	Name	Officer Skill	Reputation	Bonus Reputation
Shiphandling		Captain				+6
Persistence						
Hand to Hand		Quartermaster[1]				+5
Resilience						
Boating		Boatswain				+3
Gunnery		Gunner				+3
Pistols						
Longarms						
Adds to morale		Cook				+4
Handiwork		Carpenter's Mate[2]				+2
		Doctor				+2
Navigation		Navigator				+2
Perform		Musician				+2
Adds to morale						
		First Mate				+2
		Second Mate				+2

Morale	Modifier to Crew Checks
Mutinous	−10%
Low	−5%
Shaken	+0%
Average	+0%
High	+0%
Very High	+5%
Fanatic	+10%

Damage:

Group	Running Wounds Total	Fresh	Wounded (−10%)	Seriously Wounded (−20%)	Mauled (−30%)	Slaughtered (−50%)
Sailing						
Gunnery						
Boarding						

Crew Sheet

Ship: **# of Men:**

                                           # Injured:

                                         # Healthy:

Base Skill:

Crew Skill	%	Officer	Name	Officer Skill	Reputation	Bonus Reputation
Shiphandling		Captain				+6
Persistence						
Hand to Hand		Quartermaster[1]				+5
Resilience						
Boating		Boatswain				+3
Gunnery		Gunner				+3
Pistols						
Longarms						
Adds to morale		Cook				+4
Handiwork		Carpenter's Mate[2]				+2
		Doctor				+2
Navigation		Navigator				+2
Perform		Musician				+2
Adds to morale						
		First Mate				+2
		Second Mate				+2

Morale	Modifier to Crew Checks
Mutinous	−10%
Low	−5%
Shaken	+0%
Average	+0%
High	+0%
Very High	+5%
Fanatic	+10%

Damage:

Group	Running Wounds Total	Fresh	Wounded (−10%)	Seriously Wounded (−20%)	Mauled (−30%)	Slaughtered (−50%)
Sailing						
Gunnery						
Boarding						

Ship Sheet

Name: **Hull Score:**
Structure Points:
Seaworthiness:
Length: **Draft:**   **Skill Used:**
Movement:

Normal Crew:	Skeleton Crew (–20%):
Overcrewed (+10%)	Prize Crew (–10%):
Crew needed for guns:	Boarding Party:

Speed:
Weapons:

Fore:	Aft	Broadside	Broadside	Broadside

Ammo:
Cargo: ton

Ship Sheet

Name: **Hull Score:**
Structure Points:
Seaworthiness:
Length: **Draft:**   **Skill Used:**
Movement:

Normal Crew:	Skeleton Crew (–20%):
Overcrewed (+10%)	Prize Crew (–10%):
Crew needed for guns:	Boarding Party:

Speed:
Weapons:

Fore:	Aft	Broadside	Broadside	Broadside

Ammo:
Cargo: ton

RuneQuest

PIRATES

'A Pyrate is Hostis humanis generis, a common Enemy, with whom neither Faith nor Oath is to be kept... If Pyracy be committed on the Ocean, and the Pyrates in the attempt be overcome, the Captors may, without any Solemnity of Condemnation, hang them up at the Main-Yard; if they are brought to the next Port, & the Judge rejects the Tryal, or the Captors cannot wait for the Judge, without Peril or Loss, Justice may be done upon them by the Captors.'

RuneQuest Pirates brings the golden age of piracy to life! Lay hand to your cutlass and stick your pistols in your belt, friend – adventure's waiting for you offshore. Band together with other scurvy dogs and take command of a ship and a crew. Lead them to victory and plunder, or to a watery grave! Win fame and fortune, or dangle at the end of the yardarm when the Navy catches you!

The shining blue waters of the Caribbean lie before you and the wind is in your sails. What you do next is up to you!

US$ 24.95

To use this supplement, a Games Master will require RuneQuest and RuneQuest Companion.